

Bro. Johnny Carver
July 1969
Goodlettsville Missionary Baptist Church
Age 13

I realized I was lost when I was 10 years old. I went to the altar many times but could never seem to pray through. One Sunday afternoon as a 13 year old boy, my family and I went to a singing at Goodlettsville Missionary Baptist Church. The Reed family was singing. I went to the altar but again did not get satisfied. I stopped praying and stood up. I remember thinking, "Lord, I'm never going to be saved." Then a silver haired man asked me, "Son, don't you believe the Lord will save you?" I remember thinking in my heart, yes, I do. Then all of a sudden, the burden went away. God had gloriously saved my soul. Thank you, Jesus for saving grace.

Eld. Henry Smith
November 13, 1923
Ebenezer Baptist Church
Age 13

I was saved when I was nearing thirteen years old at Ebenezer Baptist Church on November 13, 1923. I had heard the gospel story by Brethren C. B. Massey, Henry Oldham, Calvin Gregory, Arthur Stenson, A. J. Sloan, and others. I was also witnessed to by many people in our community, for most of God's children did such witnessing in those days. I didn't make much of a demonstration when I got saved. I got up from the bench where I was sitting with a light heart and a peaceful feeling. I didn't shout as some of the other kids when they got saved. I had two cousins who were saved in the same revival, and they really did shout. And because I didn't have that kind of experience, I began to doubt and Satan took up and just about wore me out. It took me several years to get straightened out. I even tried to get saved again, but to no avail. God just saves people once and when He does, He wants us to confess that and not go around doubting. I never got anywhere praying until I started praying for somebody else.

When Annie Laura and I married she wasn't saved. She thought she was all right because of her good morals. We went to the revival at Ebenezer one Sunday morning, she got convicted by the preaching of Brother Willie Taylor, and somebody saw that she was under conviction and went to her and spoke just a few words; and, she broke down and began to weep. She went to the altar and I went with her and bowed beside her. But I still was in doubt, so I tried to pray for myself but I could get nowhere. The impression came to me to pray for my wife and when I did, the Lord took hold of me and I started praying for her and she was saved in a minute.

What precedes salvation is Holy Spirit conviction; you don't get saved without it. My wife was in her twenties and had never been convicted but when she got convicted she got saved. I realized I was lost about three years before I was saved. During this time, I tried to plead my own righteousness but when I got under deep conviction, I threw aside my own and trusted Jesus Christ, and when I did, deliverance came. Salvation is of the Lord. Jonah 2:9.

Katie Oldham Baker
Tuesday Night Spring Revival
McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church
Age 12

I was saved when I was twelve years old, on Tuesday night of the Spring revival at McFerrin. I had been going to the altar since the fall revival. That night, I felt like I just couldn't pray anymore. So, I was just listening to people talking and testifying in the altar area. All I remember thinking was, "I want to be like that; like saved people." Then God saved me. Even though I have doubted so many times, the blessings I continue to receive secure me.

Hugh Shoulders
July 21, 1945
Mace's Hill Missionary Baptist Church
Age 12

By preaching, principally by Eld. Calvin Gregory (Pastor) and Eld. F. W. Lambert, helper in many revivals at Mace's Hill, I was convinced that I was lost at the age of 9 or 10. I sought the Lord at an altar many times, but I was never really deeply convicted until the morning of July 21, 1945. I wrestled with that all day and until around 8:30 - 9:30 that night. I could see myself headed for a bottomless place (hell) and I was doomed. But, the Lord intervened and He rescued me and lifted that awful burden and placed His everlasting seal on my soul.

Ivorene Williams
Defeated Creek Baptist Church
Age 12

I got saved when I was 12 years old at Defeated Creek Baptist Church. I had been raised all my life to go to church every time I could. Back then, we just had service once a month. Where I went to grade school was just a short distance from church and our teacher, Mr. Lowe Smith, would let us out to go to church during revival. I don't remember how many times I went to the mourners' bench, but during one morning service, Bro. Calvin Gregory was preaching on hell and it seemed so real, I was really scared. I went to the mourners' bench and was crying and praying, then I told God I didn't know anything else to do and that minute, I could see a bright light at the end of a dark tunnel. The next thing I knew, I was on my feet and people were hugging me and shouting. I felt so much peace and happiness and have never doubted what the Lord did for me that day.

Inez Shores
June 9, 1965
Baptist Hospital

I got saved on Sunday night, June 9, 1965. I was alone in my hospital room. I was supposed to have surgery the next day. I had been under conviction for a long time, but that night I knew if anything happened to me, I would go to hell. So, I called on the Lord and He saved me. Thank the Lord.

Louann Dyer
November
Parkwood Missionary Baptist Church
Age 14

Conviction burdened me for many years as a young child. I was so convicted that nighttime was anguish for me. I was totally afraid to close my eyes at night because I was afraid of dying in my sleep and making hell my home. I always begged the Lord to save me in my bed, the barn, or somewhere in private because the devil frightened me of going to the altar. I did not believe at that time that Christians were truly interested in seeing me saved. I was afraid they would think badly of me if they knew I was lost. One particular Sunday during the invitation for sinners, my friend, Brenda Brown, turned to me and said, "Don't you want to be saved?" Up until that time, it was easy to lie when asked if I was lost. My answer was always "No." This day, I could not answer "No" to her question. Sure I wanted to be saved. That was the day the devil lost his control over my soul. As I made my way out of the pew and down the aisle toward the altar, the Lord lifted my burden and saved my soul. I suddenly realized the thing that stood between me and my salvation was that I had to come the Lord's way and not my way.

Pat Schmidt
September 1951
Union Hill Missionary Baptist Church
Age 10

I was very fortunate to have good Christian parents who took me to church every time the doors opened. We were having a revival at Union Hill in September 1951. My oldest brother, Wayne, had been going to the altar for several years and on this particular night before we left to go to church, he told that he had been saved. I remember going out into the backyard and thinking that I wanted what he had and realized at that moment that I was lost. That night, I went to the altar and began to pray and received in my heart that glorious feeling of knowing that if I died that night, I would go to Heaven.

Joan Oldham

2nd Monday night of October Revival 1975
McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church
(Middle Aisle, about 6 rows back)

I had joined McFerrin before I was accountable, then kept quiet about it—first out of fear, later out of deep shame. When I was 23 years old, Bro. Horace Head preached a sermon that struck me deeply, and I finally admitted publicly that I was a sinner. I always thought if I could just be willing to do that, I would get saved immediately, but I didn't. I went to the altar every opportunity, everywhere we went for 5 years. Sometimes I felt burdened, sometimes I felt very cold and this troubled me. On the second Monday night of the October revival after the altar service was over, June Shoulders and Annie Gregory began talking to me. More people gathered around and had a prayer for me to be saved or satisfied if I had already been saved sometime. During that prayer, I found myself smiling. I thought, "How awful to be so lost yet sit there and smile." I prayed, "If I am all right, let me smile so that I cannot hide it." Then almost without any effort on my part, I raised up and said, "I just feel like smiling," and when I did, something rushed through me that had never happened before. Satan was there instantly saying, "Nothing happened." But I know something happened, and since then, there have been times when I felt His Spirit in my heart.

Terry Blackaby
September 11, 1988
Parkwood Missionary Baptist Church

Praise the Lord for patience... I want to thank the Lord for being patient with me. I was without Him for about 25 years. Praise God that He is long suffering for those He loves. Many times I could have lost my life while I was lost but God was patient. I had put God's gift off for many years and my heart had become very hard and cold. Even with this, God put a light into my life and blessed me with my wife, Lesa. She set a great example for me on many occasions. Still, through my coldness and sin, God blessed me again with two beautiful, healthy children. Many years went by again as I saw my wife take my children to church, which began to have an effect on my heart. One day, I looked at my son who was about six years old and realized that before very long he would be in the same condition I was, and as much as I loved my children, I knew I couldn't even pray for them.

On September 11, 1988 at Parkwood Missionary Baptist Church, the Lord brought peace to my heart and soul and praise God for patience and the wonderful feeling that I could get on my knees before Him and pray for my children and others who were lost.

Praise Jesus Christ for all things.

Dean Whittemore

October 1960

My experience began in the middle of August 1960. Our oldest daughter was a little over a year old and I was away at summer camp with the Army Reserve at Fort Stewart in Georgia. My wife, June, wrote me a letter and said she hoped I would get saved so we would have a Christian home to raise our children in. This upset me because at the time, I didn't realize what she was talking about. I guess I thought I was doing a pretty good job of being a father. I think it hurt my ego. So, I went to the phone and called her. It helped me very much after she explained what she meant. This was what I think planted the seed which caused me to get saved two months later.

On Tuesday night of the first week during the October 1960 Revival, several people from church came to our house and asked me to go back to the church with them to pray with them. I made all kinds of excuses not to go with them. I promised them I would go the next night, just to get rid of them. After they left, I couldn't go to sleep until early the next morning. I didn't realize at the time but later I knew it was because I was under conviction that night. When it was time to go to church that night (Wednesday), I tried to make all kinds of excuses not to go, but I finally decided that I had to keep my word, so I got ready and went to church. When the altar call was given, I really didn't even think about it because I knew I had to go to the mourners' bench. I don't know how long I was there; all I know was that my burden was gone and I had peace in my soul and I was saved from hell. After that, I looked up and there was a group of women singing. It was the most beautiful song I've ever heard and everything seemed so bright. Some of those women have gone on to their rewards in Heaven. I am thankful for all that had a part in me getting saved. God bless them.

Jana Dickens
Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church

I realized I was lost at 10 years old and started going to the altar at Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church. I tried everything any one told me to help me trust the Lord. For about 2 years I was so afraid I could not sleep at night for fear I would die and go to torment. Finally, one day at a day service revival at Ebenezer, I was able to fully trust the Lord. I don't remember about anyone else for a space of time. It seems I saw a bright ray of light as I raised up and looked at the window and thinking this is not being saved. I thought I would shout when I got saved. My Dad was with me and we went home. He started talking to me and told me just to pray and the Lord would let me know if I got saved. I was happy that afternoon. We went back to church that night and an invitation was given for people who had been saved to unite with the church. I went up and joined the church and was baptized at the close of the revival. I have never doubted my salvation since and that was 56 years ago.

Lynn (Vetetoe) Delaney
November 4, 1982
Cemetery near my in-laws house
Age 16

I was 16 years old and things in my life had gotten so out of control that I was at a point in my life where I thought I was dying. I decided to go for a walk in the graveyard behind my in-laws house. As I was walking, I was praying and I heard a noise that scared me, and as I turned to leave, Jesus took my hand and let me know everything was going to be okay. And what a feeling came over me, all my burdens were lifted; I was a new person.

Ray Vetetoe

June 30, 1968

Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church, Portland, TN

Age 12

I was 12 years old and the son of a preacher. We were attending a revival at Emmanuel Missionary Baptist Church in Portland, TN. Bro. Norman Cliburn was the helping preacher and had preached that night. I have never had hell preached to me in such a hot fashion before. A sister asked me to go to the altar, this would make my 5th or 6th time, and thanks to God, my last. Bro. Edward Rader came and knelt next to me and was speaking to me and praying for me and as soon as he had quit, God saved my soul. This was the best day of my life.

Sue Hines

1936

Gladdice Missionary Baptist Church, Jackson County

Age 11

I had gone to the altar time and time again until I thought I am never going to get saved (I wanted to shout). In 1936 when I was eleven years old, the Lord saved me at Gladdice Missionary Baptist Church in Jackson County. I did not join the church until 1954. My husband and I were baptized into McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church on June 20, 1954 by Bro. F. L. Ray. Thank you Jesus for saving all that have ever been saved and the ones that will be saved in the future.

Truman Dickens
October 1946
Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church

On the second Tuesday in October in 1946, the Lord saved my soul. I went for a few years before I told anyone. One day, the Lord got hold of me and I have tried to serve Him ever since then.

Hollis Whitley
July 1937
Pleasant Shade, TN
Age 20

I was saved one night about 9 or 10 o'clock at home. I joined Mt. Tabor Church the next day. I was baptized by Bro. F. W. Lambert. What happened that night is what is carrying me to Heaven to see my blessed Savior Jesus.

James (Jimmy) Pratt
August 1, 1997
McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church
Age 13

I was saved at McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church during the revival. I was saved by the grace of GOD on August 1, 1997. This was my first time at the altar and my third time at this church. I am so glad to get to go to Heaven now. PRAISE THE LORD.

Billy Woodard
July 30, 1946
Mace's Hill Missionary Baptist Church
Age 13

As a thirteen year old boy having been under conviction for about two years, I was saved at an old-fashioned altar on a Tuesday night at Mace's Hill Missionary Baptist Church.

The next night an invitation for church membership was given and I had the desire to join. The following Sunday afternoon I was baptized by Elder Calvin Gregory in Dixon's Creek at Dixon Springs, Tennessee.

Joe Whitley
November 17, 1965
Home
Age 16

The Lord saved me when I was a 16 year old boy at home in bed. It was on a Tuesday night about 9:15 PM. I had been under conviction for almost two weeks. But that night the peace of the Lord came into my heart and that trouble and sorrow was gone. I had never known such peace and joy before Jesus saved me. The next morning was the prettiest morning I had ever seen. And it was all because of what Jesus had done for me. Praise His Holy Name.

Lori Thomas

April 1981

College

Age 21

I was raised on the gospel message, living in a home with parents that loved and honored Jesus. When I was fourteen (April 1974) the truth of who Jesus was and what He did for me pierced my heart and I began seeking Him. I went to an altar and prayed at that time but did not get fully satisfied. I spent the next seven years trying to live my life for the Lord but knowing how miserably I was failing, and continually feeling the burden of guilt for that failure and the burden of my sin. The Lord kept drawing me to Him in such a tender way and I felt His drawing. I knew it was Him but I was unsure of what I needed to do. I remember sensing His call so strong that I would cry out "I hear you Lord but what do I need to do!" I remember the struggle being very intense for two years and I continually kept asking "What is it Lord?" Finally, one evening when I was in college, I put on some Christian music and as I listened and prayed for Jesus to save me, the burden was gone and the question was answered, and I knew I'd been touched by the Lord. I was overwhelmed. I remember sitting in a bentwood rocker saying "Thank you Jesus!" over and over.

Trying to love the Lord and serve Him of my own righteousness was my struggle and my burden, finally surrendering to His righteousness was my freedom. My life changed for good at that point; the way I thought, acted, my attitude, everything. I was truly "a new creation in Him!"

Talmadge Woodall

July 1938

At Home, Fowler Ford Road, Sumner County

Age 13

Sometime around midnight out in the yard at home, the Lord lifted the heavy burden and saved my soul. I am depending on what the Lord did for me that night in 1938 to land me in Heaven at the end of my earthly journey.

Carol McClanahan
October 1953
Third Baptist Church
Age 9

I was saved in October 1953 on a Thursday night during a revival at Third Baptist Church when I was 9 years old. I remember thinking at school that day what would happen to me if I died and I was afraid. That night while they were singing Only Trust Him, I started praying at my seat. I prayed for the Lord to save me and He did. I felt the burden being lifted off me and a feeling of sweet peace came over me. The next day at school, I wondered if I looked different to anybody because I sure felt different.

Tom Howard
February 14, 1967
Enon Missionary Baptist Church
Age 22

After several years of living with the knowledge that I was lost and bound for eternal damnation, I attended several churches where people prayed for me. I never went to the mourners' bench until February 14, 1967 at Enon Missionary Baptist Church in Macon County Tennessee. My heart was so heavy and I was troubled. After pleading my case to the Lord, repenting of my past sins, the Lord gloriously saved my soul. That was the most outstanding day of my life even to this day. I know that the peace He placed in my heart that day will land me on that bright shore of Heaven. Glory to God in the highest. I was almost 23 years old. At the time I wrote this, I would have been celebrating 30 years in God's family. *I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.* **Psalm 116:9**

Debbie Hines
September 30, 1964
Home in Bed
Age 9

I was lost for several months before I got saved because I can remember how I dreaded revivals, dreaded people asking me if I was lost, and dreaded that terrible ache in my chest and stomach when they asked and I lied and said, "No, I'm not lost." Finally, on September 30, 1964, in my bed, I started praying, asking the Lord to save me. I can remember praying and then suddenly I was lying there singing in a whisper because I didn't want anyone else to wake up and hear me. I knew the Lord had saved me, but I didn't tell anyone until several weeks later at Salem Church in Gallatin. Bro. Wm. E. Massey came back and asked if I was lost and I told him no, I had been saved. Mom and Dad weren't there, but my sister was and she shouted enough for all of us. We got home late that night. The next morning, Mom and Dad got the news and we had another service!! I joined Maple Grove in November 1964 and was baptized by Bro. Claudie Miller. On October 19, 1973, I married Steve and moved my membership to McFerrin.

Christine Angel Shores

July 28, 1948

Cornwell Chapel Church, Smith County

Age 14

After about 2 years of seeking and wanting to be saved, on July 28, 1948 at the altar in Cornwell Chapel Church, I surrendered my soul to Jesus Christ. Peace came over me and my burden was gone. My life has been blessed through the years.

Courtney Hines Crews
October 5, 1992
McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church
Age 11

I was saved during the fall revival of 1992 at McFerrin. I was lost for a while before that because I can remember that every time we had an altar call, I went to the bathroom to avoid people asking me if I was lost. Anyway, my 7 year old cousin got saved that same night before me. When I went up to shake her hand, I busted out crying. Shirley Whitley led me over to the first pew and I started to pray. After about 15 minutes of praying, the burden on my heart lifted away and I knew I was saved. I joined the church the next night and was baptized the following Sunday.

Patty Shoulders Mayes
McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church
Age 12

The night I got saved was a special night. There were about 10 to go up. We had a big meeting that night. I prayed to Jesus for my soul to be saved. I told Him I was lost and out in sin. He saved my soul that night and I have been happy every day since. The Lord will save you if you believe and trust Him.

Daniel Dyer
August 1980
Long View Missionary Baptist Church
Age 27

In the summer of 1980, Elder Billy D. Carter was the evangelist at Beckwith Missionary Baptist Church revival. I thought I was saved as a young boy but I had been misled.

Brother Carter and Brother Armstrong preached all week about being saved. I was under conviction. At the end of the revival, I could feel the devil telling me, "You made it. Go on home, you're all right." My wife and other friends at Beckwith wanted to go to the starting night of the revival at Longview. I made excuses to keep from going. My wife insisted that I go. Brother Carter started preaching that night and I thought I had again made it through the sermon. The invitation was given and I held out until I could not stand the conviction any longer. I went to the altar and found peace with my Lord.

The following Sunday, I told my brothers and sisters at Beckwith Church about my experience of salvation. I presented myself for membership and was baptized by Elder Tom Armstrong.

Mary Woodard
June 12, 1945
Peyton's Creek Baptist Church
Age 11

In 1945 when I was an eleven year old girl, I began to feel the tugging in my heart that I was approaching accountability. My grandmother who lived with us often mentioned it at night when she and I went upstairs to our bedrooms. I can remember climbing the stairs hoping the subject wouldn't come up.

The latter part of June during Vacation Bible School, I became fully convicted that I was lost. I didn't tell anyone and I don't recall making any attempt to seek the Lord during those miserable days, but I knew that when Sunday came I would go to the altar. I don't think there was ever any doubt in my mind that I would be saved that day, and that is exactly the way it happened. Shortly thereafter, I joined Peyton's Creek Baptist Church where I had attended all my life and was baptized in Peyton's Creek.

Sara Dias
July 20, 1997
McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church
Age 23

While in bed on the night of the 19th of July, I felt someone talking to me telling me that He is there whenever I am willing to give it up to God. I kept asking myself, what else I have to do to be saved. I wanted to do so much to be able to deserve being saved.

The next day I wasn't going to go to church but something told me I would miss something good. When I got to church, everything was going as normal until Bro. Johnny's mother stood up to sing. While she was singing, I just couldn't stop crying. I knew all that she sang about Him being a great God was true. Then I stopped crying and I knew that God was there for me and my heart felt like a light cloud. I just knew my future would be great from that day on. I praise Him every day of my life.

Peggy Towe
McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church
Age 10

I was saved when I was ten years old in the basement at McFerrin Church. I was very lucky because I only went to the altar one time. It was during a revival and they gave an altar call. I went up with some other children. I was praying and Jackie Wilmore talked to me. I remember thinking he is messing his hair up to talk to me so he must be really concerned. I remember feeling like I was in a very deep dark pit, then I saw the light shining bright. I was saved. I am so thankful that God loved us enough to die for our sins.

Charlotte Houchins Rappuhn

November 2, 1975

Chalybeate Springs United Baptist Church, Smiths Grove, KY

Age 14

I went to the altar for several years before I was saved. There were times when I was lost, that I would go to the altar and feel nothing at all. After awhile, I was afraid the Lord had given up on me altogether. I think that fear led me to be more willing to rely on the Lord, and not on myself, during the revival in which I was saved. Near the end of the service, I felt I should tell everyone I had been saved. I didn't want to do that because I thought that if I did, I would have to immediately tell everybody that I wasn't saved and they would be confused and disappointed. The pastor asked me if I want to adjourn and come back that night and I said no. I just stood there in front of the altar for what seemed like an hour, and I felt that everyone could see how hard my heart was beating. Then I finally just decided that I had to trust in the Lord because trusting in myself had not gotten me anywhere. So I told everyone I was saved. I can remember that they were all so happy—and I frowned because I thought I'd have to start telling them I was wrong. But before I could do that, the Lord saved me.

I can't describe this part very well, but I was not in that church anymore—I was somewhere else—like my soul and my mind had just soared above it all. I don't know how long that lasted, but when I was conscience of being back in the church, I remember everyone was so happy, and I was happy too, and I knew I didn't have to correct anything because I really had been saved. I have doubts about so many things in life, but I can't really doubt my salvation. Even when I've been the coldest, I don't feel the need to pray to be saved, I just feel the need to be forgiven.

Henry Brothers

In MY room

Age 6

One night my mom came in my room and asked if I ever had thought about being saved. We talked about it and decided we would pray that night. When I was saved, I did not see lights or anything like that. I just felt safe from a lot of things.

I started doubting because nothing special really happened. Then at the 2008 revival He (Jesus) told me.... Yeah.

Ernest L. Shores

October 13, 1968

At Home in Bed

Age 38

It was the second Sunday night in a revival at McFerrin. I was in so much trouble that night. I came home and went to bed and around midnight, the peace came to my heart. Thank you, Lord.

Brad Shoulders
October 1981
McFerrin Baptist Church
Age 12

The Lord saved me when I was 12 years old. I remember the sweetest peace came over my soul and then almost immediately the devil came on the scene and tried to tell me that I wasn't saved. So I didn't tell anybody that night or the next 4 years. I would pray every day and ask the Lord to lead me and do the right things. Then one Sunday when I was 16, Bro. Taylor gave a invitation for membership. When I had come to church that day, I had an easy feeling about myself. I prayed throughout the sermon, and God let me know that I was taken care of and to put the devil aside. So I joined the church that day and finally, publicly, let everyone know that I was saved. And since that day, I have no doubts and look forward to seeing Jesus some day.

Steve Allen Hines
April 1960
McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church
Age 8

I had heard about Jesus as long as I could remember hearing about anything or anyone. My parents were very diligent in taking my brother and me to Sunday School and to church. At the tender age of eight, God began to draw me to the cross. At that age it seemed like I could get more out of Sunday School than I could get out of the church service. My Sunday School teacher at that time was Mrs. Scott. She was also one of the church's pianists. Mrs. Scott was very careful in teaching her students about being saved. I had begun having nightmares that would scare the life out of me. I could not get to sleep for such a long time each night and when I did, I would have that very same scary dream. One Sunday morning in Mrs. Scott's Sunday School class is where I found that peace that I had been searching for. As she was teaching, I was just meditating and that is where that peace filled my soul. I was not going to tell anyone, but I could not keep it inside of me. Mrs. Scott was the first one that I told. Thank the Lord for His salvation. No more nightmares after that day.

Ercie Whitley
October 1916
Meadorville Missionary Baptist Church
Age 13

It was in October at a night revival and Bro. Luther Stewart was preaching. I knew I was lost but was not going to the altar on the first night. Bro. Stewart started singing a song, "I Have a Father Over Yonder," and I could hardly make it to the altar. I have been saved 81 years. I joined McFerrin Church in 1954.

Paul Holloway

In my vehicle on my way to work

Age 29

One day, approximately 21 years ago at the age of 29, I was going through some troubled times and was at work one day when a man I knew asked me if I had been saved. Having never been to church but a few times in my life, I didn't know how or what to say. I was upset that someone would have the nerve to ask such a question. He proceeded to tell me about Jesus and what He had done for me and why I needed to be saved. Needless to say, I didn't know what to say or what to do. He made me feel so bad and I couldn't get past the bad feeling that he had left me with. A few days later as this feeling would come and go, I got in even worse shape. I was on my way to work one night about 11:15 PM (at the time I worked for DuPont), and as I passed through the Rivergate area on Myatt Drive, this was on my mind again. I was in as bad a shape as you can get. I remember crying and saying to myself, "Lord help me, I had rather be dead than feel this way." Something came over me and I felt different. I had such a good feeling. I went to work and everything seemed different, but I couldn't explain it. I didn't even realize I had been saved. I do remember saying, "Lord, give me a Christian wife to help me raise my children and a church to go to." I don't even know why I asked the Lord for this because I had never prayed in my life, much less ask the Lord for anything. Not realizing what had happened to me, I never told the man that asked me about my salvation.

A few months later, I met Shila and she asked me to go to church with her. My first thought was to say no but I didn't, I said yes. The first time I attended a service at New Bethel, I felt that Bro. Vanderpool was preaching the sermon directly to me. I started attending church on a regular basis and later married. My mother-in-law asked me if I had been saved. I answered her by saying "I don't know, I don't feel lost, as a matter of fact, I feel good when I'm in church and hear the Lord's word." I related the experience to Shila on my way to work that night. At this time, I realized that was when the Lord saved me. She told me I needed to join the church and be baptized. I was shy and didn't know anyone at the church but with the help of the Lord, when the doors of the church were opened I felt something pick me up from my seat and I was telling my experience with eyes full of tears. Through the years, I have had more prayers answered and I know that I'm not worthy of one, but I'm glad Jesus saved my soul.

Hartley Hines
March 2011
CFT – Jr. Youth House
Age 11

I was saved by the grace of God in March of 2011. I was in CFT down at the Junior Youth House. Brother David Woodard and Sister Cindy Farmer were speaking to us about how we can't do it ourselves. No matter what it is, getting saved or just doing things in our everyday life, we can't do it ourselves. I knew revival was coming up and I was dreading it. So instead of just sitting there waiting for revival to come, I prayed. I told God I couldn't do it by myself and He saved me. Until that moment, I had no idea what a terrible job I was doing trying to be saved. I was taking things too literally. I had no idea that those few simple words could change my life forever, but they did. That night, I didn't see bright lights or hear singing voices. I simply felt better. I still do to this day. By the way, to any of you that are reading this, if you're lost or you know someone that's lost....don't wait. You don't have to be at church or the altar to be saved. You don't have to be in the United States! You just need to pray and be saved. Don't hold it off like I did, just pray! Love the Lord Forever!

Allen Hines
October 6, 1986
McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church
Age 9

I was saved in October 1986 when I was 9 years old at McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church.

Jane Wilmore
June 1949
Third Baptist Church
Age 11

One Sunday morning in Sunday School our preacher was talking to us before class. When he finished, he asked us to bow our heads for prayer. Bro. Bunyon Smith asked if anyone wanted to be remembered in prayer and, if so, raise their hand. I had really been bothered and afraid to sleep at night. I was afraid I would die and go to hell if I went to sleep. But on this day, as I raised my hand and heard him say God bless you, I was saved. I had this peace and love that filled me beyond words. I couldn't wait for him to finish his sermon so I could join the church and let everyone know that I had something different. Also, I couldn't wait to go to the Lord's house every time the doors were open. Praise the Lord for salvation. All it took was for me to raise my hand for help and He reached down. I no longer was afraid to lay down my head and go to sleep.

Rachel Carver Morrison
September 14, 1988
Victory Missionary Baptist Church
Age 7

I was sitting in the second row on the right side of the church. My friends and I were just sitting, not listening, drawing the usual 7 year old stuff. My daddy was preaching and then all of a sudden, I just got this heavy burden. I went back to my mom and told her my heart was hurting. She asked me if I wanted to go to the altar and pray and I said, yes. So I went up to the altar and prayed and prayed for hours. Then my burden was lifted and I looked up and said "Daddy, I'm saved." It was an awesome experience.

Charlie W. Brown
July 1984
Bethel Missionary Baptist Church
Age 9

I really did not know that I was under conviction until the very day that I was saved. It was during a summer revival and Bro. Paul Bryson was helping my father in the nightly meetings. I am not sure that anyone realized that I was old enough to be lost, but that Friday night, I had a heavy burden in my heart. I remember thinking that hell would be my eternal home as we drove to the church that night. I barely remember who was doing the preaching. I was just waiting for the altar call so I could set things right with God. I was sitting on the front row, so when the call was given, I had only a few steps to the altar. It didn't take very long for the burden to be replaced with complete peace. All it took was for me to ask forgiveness of my sinful life and turn it completely over to God.

Emma Wilkerson
August 24, 1952
Pleasant Valley Missionary Baptist Church
Age 15

On August 24, 1952 at Pleasant Valley Missionary Baptist Church when I was fifteen years old, the Lord saved me. It was during their revival. I had been going to the altar most of the week, then on Sunday night during the benediction prayer, I really wanted to be saved before I left that night. There's a space of time I don't know about except when I came to myself, I knew I was saved. I was so happy and I loved everybody. In 1956, I joined McFerrin and Bro. Ray baptized me.

Troy Hooten
August 6, 1992
Victory Missionary Baptist Church
Age 29

I grew up attending a non-Baptist Christian denomination church but was never saved nor baptized. I had a head knowledge of the Bible but no salvation experience with Christ Jesus. I began sporadically attending Victory with Andrea, now my wife, as we were dating and I knew that church was an important element in her life. When we began attending Victory, I had not been attending any church regularly for about 10 years. I had little interest in spiritual things and only attended for Andrea's benefit. Through the course of attending Victory, I heard the word and true doctrine of salvation preached for the first time.

At first, I had no interest in salvation. I was consumed by things of the world, self-reliant and full of pride. I thought that I had no need of salvation. About a week prior to the revival, I had begun to realize my separation from God. I had frequent dreams where I saw myself separated from God and Heaven by a deep and wide river. During the revival, we attended every night but my foolish pride prevented me from seeking the Lord. Numerous people approached me to ask about my position with the Lord but I would not budge. Finally, on Thursday night, I could hardly wait for the preacher to finish his sermon and have the altar call. The burden was intense. At 29 years old, the Lord saved me and granted that sweet peace after only a few agonizing minutes on the altar. I thank God for making a way to cross that river and for those people who were praying for me even before I prayed for myself. Blessed be the name of the Lord.

Torre Blackaby
April 5, 1994
New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church
Age 9

I was saved at New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church during a revival. I was 9 years old. My new birthday is April 5th.

Don Morrow Escue
Summer of 1964
Ivy Memorial Baptist Church
Age 8-3/4

Jesus came into my heart the summer of 1964 during a revival at Ivy Memorial Baptist Church. I was down at the altar seeking the Lord when His sweet peace came over my entire body. I don't remember the exact day I was saved but I do remember very clearly being baptized around September 1964 and receiving my first Bible after joining the church.

Benton Wilmore
July 1926
Union Camp Missionary Baptist Church
Age 14

I started going to the altar when I was 10 years old. In our community, there were several old time missionary Baptist churches. Each fall these churches would have a revival. My parents would carry me to the revivals and when the altar call was given, I would go up. After about 3 years, I quit going to the altar—still not saved. Later, maybe a year, my parents carried me to a revival at Day's Cross Roads Missionary Baptist Church. When the altar call was given I did not go up. The preacher came to me inviting me to the altar. I would not go up, then my Mother came to me, put her arms around me and said, "Benton, when my life is over I am going to Heaven because I got saved when I was a small girl. Don't you want to go?" I said yes. I started going back to the altar. What Mother asked me stayed with me. When the revival at Union Camp began in July 1926, I was one of the first to go the altar. Then on Wednesday night in July 1926, the Lord saved me. I joined the church and was baptized by the pastor, Elder. R. O. Sanders.

James (Doc) Perrigo
October 1943
Sycamore Valley Missionary Baptist Church
Age 13

When I was 13 years old, they let us out of school to go to day revivals. Some of my friends got saved at Ebenezer Church during their revival and I really got concerned about myself. It seemed I had lost all my friends. The revival started at Sycamore Valley and I went to hear what the preacher said. I sat about mid way back in the church. The preacher gave the altar call but I didn't go. A sweet godly sister named Fanny Evitts came to me and I hit that altar. There the Lord gloriously saved my soul. Later, Bro. Calvin Gregory baptized me.

Megan Lebo
July 19, 1996
At home in bed
Age 12

I started feeling the Lord dealing with me when I was about ten. I started going to the altar but after a while, it started to become, I guess you would say habitual. So I stopped going to the altar and never knew if I was saved or not. But then after a couple of years, I wanted to know if I was saved; so I asked the Lord if I was really saved to remind me about it throughout the day and He did. That is when I knew I was saved.

Kathleen McCain
July 1957
Athens Missionary Baptist Church
Age 16

I realized I was lost during preaching one Sunday morning when I was seven years old. I did not admit it for five to six years. My Sunday School Superintendent asked me about my condition. I lied and said I was not lost. He died that same week. I promised God if I lived until the next altar call at church, I would go. I continued searching for God and doing all I knew to do without success. I heard of a girl being saved at the toilet of a country church. I made my mind up then that I would not get saved if it had to be there. One Wednesday around noon during the revival, I got under conviction. I was praying and telling Jesus I would be glad to go to the toilet if He would just save me. I got up from the altar and started to walk away but only took a few steps when God stopped me so abruptly I fell over on the piano. When I was willing to do things His way, Jesus saved my soul.

Bob McCain
November 1954
Casky, KY
Age 13

In November 1954, God gave me that sweet peace when I asked Him for forgiveness. He lifted that burden and gave me that everlasting peace.

Barbara Gammons
September 16, 1945
Union Chapel Methodist Church
Age 10

This was the church that my grandparents belonged to. Their revival had begun and we were invited to come. I had never felt like I was lost until that night but before his sermon was over, I was under conviction. I went to the altar and upon my knees, I called upon the Lord to save my soul. And, I praise Him for that wonderful night.

E.G. Williams, Jr.
July 28, 1946
Bethany Baptist Church
Age 16

During a revival at Bethany Baptist Church in July 1946, Bro. L. A. Stuart was the pastor. My Dad had been called to preach and was helping in the revival. I got under conviction and was saved. Bro. Stuart was getting along in years so the church gave Daddy the authority to baptize me. He baptized me and others that had been saved that year.

Johnnie J. Massey
October 1925
Sycamore Valley Missionary Baptist Church
Age 13

I was sitting beside Aunt Bide Russell and the service had been dismissed. Most of the people had gone home. I was praying to the Lord silently. I was saying, "I want to be saved now, not tomorrow, not next year, but now." I felt a sweet peace in my soul. I didn't tell anyone. I wanted to tell Aunt Bide, but I got up and went on home. A day or two later, my dad "Cap" Massey said to me. "You have stopped coming to the altar." I said, "Yes, I have." He said, "I don't know why, but salvation is nothing more than peace with God." I joined Sycamore Valley Church and was baptized by C. B. Massey.

Marie Massey
October 1940
Goodwill Missionary Baptist Church
Age 17

My Aunt was talking to me as I was sitting on the front seat. The next thing I knew I was on my feet; it was on a Sunday night. In 1941, I united with Mace's Hill Missionary Baptist Church in July and was baptized by Elder Calvin Gregory.

Lori Hines Lafayette

June 18, 1987

At Home

Age 8

I will never forget the day I was saved. I realized I was lost about a month before I actually told anyone. When I finally told my mom, we sat down in the living room and talked for at least an hour. She made me feel so much better about the situation. She let me know exactly what I needed to do in order to be saved. That night, I went to bed and I prayed my little heart out. All of a sudden, the sadness in my heart turned to joy and the burden was lifted. I was then lulled to sleep by the song "Amazing Grace" playing over and over in my head and in my heart.

Mayme Elrod
July 24, 1955
Providence Baptist Church
Age 13

I was saved on a Thursday night on July 24, 1955 at Providence Baptist Church in Franklin, KY. It was during the revival. I was baptized in the Red River. I was convicted and the preaching really bothered me, especially if the preacher was preaching about hell or the second coming of Christ. I was so afraid Jesus would come back and I wouldn't be ready.

After I was saved, the preaching didn't bother me and I enjoyed listening to the sermons. I had a peace in my heart that everything was all right and I still have that peace. I thank the Lord for giving me a wonderful church home like McFerrin.

James Hill
October 6, 1950
Macon County
Age 15

We went to a Presbyterian church until I was 12 years old. It was across the road from where we lived and we walked there. We moved close to Macedonian Baptist Church when I was 15 years old. One day after school, I was out in the bean field and got under conviction. I had thought about being saved before then and that night, sitting alone in the kitchen, I asked the Lord to forgive me and save me. I had a great burden on me. There is a spot of time I don't remember, and then there was just peace in my soul.

John Michael Carver
July 17, 1995
Outside my home by a bush
Age 10

I was outside my house one afternoon about 5:30 PM. I was shooting basketball when all of a sudden God popped in my mind. I began to start thinking about how He had to die on the cross for me because of my sins. I felt really bad all over and couldn't get it off my mind. I sat down by a bush that was in the backyard and I began to pray. I remember feeling all that pain but after I prayed for about a minute, it left and I felt happy. I began to yell out and started saying all this stuff about how God was so good and I felt so happy. It was the greatest moment of my life. There has been nothing else in my life even close to that feeling and I thank the Lord with all my heart for it.

Jill D. Carver
September 1970
At home in my bed
Age 15

Even as a child, I would pray every night. Sometimes, I would say the Lord's Prayer or something I had learned. There was always an awareness that there was someone higher than me and aware of me. But when I was about 14, I quit praying and even became hard hearted toward things. I began to question the existence of God.

At 15, I began dating my future husband and he took me to church. I was pretty content with my life at that time. I never really remember hearing the "gospel" but I did see the gospel lived out in the lives of the people in that church. I remember the warmth and concern they had for others, especially the love. I had never been to a church where there was an outward expression of the Holy Spirit – the testimonies, the shouting, and prayers.

One of those Sundays, there were several who had gone to the altar to pray. The pastor came to me, as he had many times, and as he shook my hand he asked me if I would be in Heaven. It was as if a dark cloud passed over me and I began to cry. I went to the altar and had a good, long cry. I felt a sense of relief and even told I had been saved. But as the day lingered, with it came an aching sorrow deep in my heart. That night I went to bed early. I thought that I just needed a good night's sleep. But the moment I laid down, the burden was so heavy all I could do was pray. I began to weep and cry out to God, not understanding what was happening to me. I thought surely I must be saved – I had gone to the altar and prayed that morning. But as the burden of my heart grew more unbearable, my prayer changed to "Lord, I know I'm lost, please save me." I was immediately filled with peace, joy, and rejoicing but most of all an overwhelming sense of my unworthiness in His presence. I am still amazed that God continues to shape and mold lives that have been warped by the world and change them into His priceless treasures!

Joyce Duke
August 1949
Long Fork Missionary Baptist
Age 9

It was a summer revival in August 1949. I was nine years old and Bro. Fuqua was preaching that night at a small church in Macon County, Long Fork Missionary Baptist. The service was long and I thought he would never finish. I knew I was hurting inside. I was sitting in the back of the church on an old wooden bench. When the altar call was given I quickly went down and during the prayer I remember telling God that I was ready to give it to Him. My Aunt Martha Whitley was praying with me. It seems I just faded away and woke up rejoicing. I was nine years old. I came up shouting. Through the years, God has been with me. I am happy in Him. He is my strength and He will carry me safely over the mountains.

Terri Curran
February 5, 1996
Metropolitan Baptist Church
Age 29

February 5, 1996 was a day I had sought and prayed for daily for over 3 months. I had an unquenchable thirst to find out more about our Gracious and Loving Lord. Every day I would read the Bible and then pray for salvation. I tried praying in the morning, the afternoon and the evening, I tried praying with the lights on, with the lights off, while laying down, sitting up, with my face on the floor, and I never felt the sweet peace come over me. It quickly escalated to the point I was nervous just leaving the house because I knew if something happened I would go to hell.

I am someone who must be in control and I thought I could control when the Lord saved my soul. As all children of God know, we are not saved until our hearts believe. On that wonderful day my heart relinquished itself to the Lord and I was saved standing in Metropolitan Baptist Church after listening to a wonderful and spiritual message by Dr. Tim Lee. On this day I had the sweet peace I had so longed for.

Randy Dillard
Old McFerrin Church
Age 10-12

I had been going to the mourners' bench during the revival. Brother F. L. Ray was the preacher. The nightly service was about to dismiss and I was standing next to my Dad in the middle of the altar. During the closing prayer when all was quiet, a peace came over me and the Lord saved my soul.

Mildred Dillard
Summer of 1942
Clay Street Christian Church
Age 12

As a small child, all my family attended Clay Street Christian Church. We went every Sunday and my brothers and sisters and myself were active in the Youth Group. In the summer of '42, we had a visiting preacher Colonel Tom Eakes, US Army Chaplain, who held our revival. After a wonderful sermon and being scared, I put my trust in the Lord and was saved.

Cornelia Hines
July 31, 1997
McFerrin's Mourners' Bench
Age 25

I had grown up in the Methodist Church and hadn't heard much about being saved. When I started going to church with Greg at McFerrin, I heard about salvation but I didn't understand it. I just couldn't believe and comprehend that peaceful experience everyone was testifying about. I finally came to realize (after many stubborn words on my part) that I really needed to be saved and have that personal relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ. I began to pray about it and continued to do so for about 3 years. McFerrin's revival started and I dreaded it like all lost people do. During the revival, I would look around and see all of the saved people and hear their testimonies. I wanted what they had and I began to get "fed up" with the feeling of being lost. I knew that what I had to do was the one thing I didn't want to do...go to the altar. Taking that step would mean forgetting my pride and admitting to everyone that I wasn't saved. On Thursday, July 31st, I knew I had to go to the altar. I had to make that step, and I did. I was crying and praying for God to save my soul and by His grace, He did. I am so thankful to God for that peace He put in my heart and for all that He continues to do in my life. How sweet it will be when I can thank Him personally in Heaven!

Greg Hines

Date: See below

McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church

Age: See below

It has long been a joke in our family about my inability to remember dates. From birthdays, to anniversaries, to ages of friends and family members, this has always been a problem with me. Having said this, I do not recall a specific date, time, or even year in which I was saved. For that matter, the date and time is not important to me. What is important to me is that I know I am saved.

I do know it was during a revival and I had been seeking the Lord for quite some time and had become frustrated. One problem was that I had gone to the altar too early. I went to the altar because I thought I should and this confused me. But one night I felt a peace throughout my body and I will never forget looking up from the altar and seeing Tom Howard's face. I did not tell for quite a while. I doubted it for a while but God kept putting that peaceful look of Tom Howard's face that night in my mind. I have never shared this with Tom but ever since that night, he has had a special place in my heart. In closing, I would tell the unsaved not to be so concerned with times and dates but be concerned with the actual wonderful event.

Arthur Breeze

Spring 1961

In a truck near Coldwater, MI

Age 40

I attended a Missionary Baptist Church with my parents through my early and teen years. I thought I was saved and was baptized at age 13 in Cedar County, MO. I joined the Navy after high school and attended service whenever possible. After the war, I sort of neglected going to church. I moved from Florida to Nashville in 1950. I did attend a Nazarene Church for some time. I began to realize that I was not getting out of life what I should. I drove a truck for 16 years and it was on a trip from Pennsylvania that the Lord began to deal with me. Just south of Coldwater, MI, I had to pull off the road and let Him take over my life. It was a feeling of peace I had never felt before. Through the Duke family and the Whitley family, I began to attend McFerrin. Bro. Taylor was the Pastor at that time. I was baptized and became a member of McFerrin on August 4, 1991. I have found a church home with wonderful people. Thank God for salvation.

Andrea Hooten
August 23, 1973
New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church
Age 9

I had gone to New Bethel all my life, so I knew I needed and wanted to be saved, but I had never felt conviction before. New Bethel was having a great revival—the altar was full and 2 or 3 had been saved each night. One Wednesday night, Bro. Ray came back to my sister and asked if she was lost, and she went to the altar. Then he asked my brother, and he went. He didn't say anything to me, probably because I was so young, but at that instant, all I knew was that I was lost. I don't really remember getting up, I just remember pushing my way through all the people to get to the altar. It was so full I had to go to the front row of the Amen corner to pray. All three of my parents' kids were on the altar at the same time. Lynette was saved that night. The next night Keith and I both went back to the altar. Keith was saved first, and I remember thinking "why won't He save me? What am I holding on to?-- my parents, my grandparents, my toys (remember, I was just 9)." Keith knelt down beside me and said "Andrea, He saved me, I know He'll save you too!" I prayed as hard as I could and within minutes, the fear was gone. I am truly thankful to have been saved at such a young age. I cannot even imagine how difficult it would have been to grow up without the Lord. He is my rock. He's always been there for me. No matter how many times I lost sight of Him, all I had to do was turn around and see that He was right there beside me all the time! Lord, I just want to thank you for saving my soul!

Jeff Oldham
December 10, 1981
McFerrin Church
Age 10

At the age of eight, I realized I was lost. At that point, I began seeking after Him, going to the altar during the next two or three revival services. However, I was seemingly unable to make any headway. By the age of nine or ten, I had quit seeking after God, so much so that I quit going to the altar during revival services. God, on the other hand, did not quit seeking after me. On what was, otherwise, a rather typical Sunday morning service, God brought me down to a level of heartache I had never experienced before. I vividly remember telling God, as I sat there with my face in my hands, that I simply could not go on if He didn't do something. As soon as those words left my mouth, God lifted the heartache and burden that I had felt for the past two years, and that burden has never returned.

Don Hines
1961 or 1962
McFerrin Avenue
Age 12-13

At the age of about 10, one night of our revival, I was sitting with my buddies on the front row of the middle aisle in the old church building. Sister Estell Ray came to me during the altar service and asked, "Donny, do you feel like you might be lost?" "No Ma'am," I said, probably with a look on my face which was giving me away as the seconds passed. My memory still permits me to look up into her troubled face, with tears running down her cheek, and I hear her broken voice ask me again the same question. I couldn't lie to Bro. Ray's wife twice—"Yes Ma'am," I cried and down I went on that front seat to begin my search for God. I always thought I came pretty close to Him that night and the next night, but something was missing on my part. I went to the altar for about 3 years after that and never really got any closer until one night I decided not to go for prayer, but outside instead. In the parking lot, I was trying to sort it all out, when I came to the conclusion I didn't deserve to be saved and it probably never would happen to me. That little soul-searching session alarmed me to the point of getting much more serious about my eternal welfare.

A short time after that night in the parking lot, I went to the altar and finally surrendered everything to God. Very calmly and gently, the peace of God came to me. I didn't jump up and tell anyone; I didn't shout or shake anybody's hand. I just kept sitting there, enjoying this sweet peace that had come over me. The devil attacked me while I was sitting there and said "That's not it, you better keep seeking, you don't have it." Well, if I didn't get saved, maybe God will save Sammy tonight. (Sammy Parker had been going to the altar a long time and was sitting next to me that night.) For about 6 months, I continued in my state of confusion. It was almost as bad as being lost. I finally told it one night at Harmony, and then the joy came to accompany that peace of God which I still have within me. *Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift. II Cor. 9:15*

Lovie Powell

1935

At home in Difficult, TN

Age 15

I was saved at home one night after everyone else had gone to bed for the night. The revival had been going on at Difficult Church in Smith County and I had been to the altar several times. I began to think I was never going to be saved. I went to bed with a heavy heart and began to pray for the Lord to save me. Finally I thought, "I don't know anything else I can do." That's when peace came and I was saved! I joined the church at Difficult and was baptized by Bro. Calvin Gregory in the creek near the church. In September 1946, I moved my membership to New Bethel and on April 11, 1948 to McFerrin where I have been a member for the past 49 years. Our three children were saved at McFerrin and this church is very special to me.

Doyle J. Powell
February 11, 1940
Arcola, IL
Age 22

I was saved on February 11, 1940 in a feed barn in Arcola, Illinois. A minister by the name of Donald Poe came in while I was doing chores and we knelt down and prayed for the Lord to save me and I was saved there. We moved back to Tennessee and I united with New Bethel Baptist Church in September 1946. Bro. Sloan baptized me in Mansker Creek. I moved my membership to McFerrin on April 11, 1948. Our three children were saved at McFerrin and I love this church, our Pastor, and all the members. I hope to spend the rest of my life here.

Gwen Beasley
July 1946
Mace's Hill Missionary Baptist
Age 13

I knew I was lost when I was eleven years old. I went to the altar for a long time, but I was never really under conviction until the day He took the burden away and that was the fourth Sunday in July 1946 at Mace's Hill. Bro. Calvin Gregory and Bro. Lambert were holding the revival. I joined Ebenezer Missionary Baptist in October 1946. Bro. Fountain Ray was our Pastor, so he baptized me in the creek. I moved my membership to McFerrin in June 1967.

Shila Holloway
August 1954
New Bethel Missionary Church

I was saved on a Thursday night during the revival in August 1954 at New Bethel Church in Goodlettsville, TN. I had been going to the altar for four years seeking the Lord. Now as I look back, I think I was seeking the Lord with my mind and not my heart. One Wednesday night during the revival, Brother Russell spoke words that got to me; I was truly convicted. I did not get saved that night but the next night I went to church so convicted that I knew I needed the Lord. I was on the altar with others and I was in such a shape that I knew I could not go on in that shape. I was seeking the Lord with all my heart and that night about 11:00 PM I was saved. That night as I went out of the church, I remember how bright the moon and stars seemed to be. I did not know at the age of thirteen how much I would need the Lord all my life. I thank Him every day for that Thursday night in August 1954.

Sam Oldham
1953
East Main Street Missionary Baptist Church
Age 8

I was saved when I was 8 years old. I don't know the exact day, but it was about 2 weeks before our fall revival at East Main Street Missionary Baptist Church in Hartsville in 1953.

One night, I was sitting on the side of my bed looking at songs in the song book that we used at church, Favorite Songs and Hymns. Song number 13, "Gethsemane," told so vividly about Christ dying on the cross. It was almost like I was present at the Crucifixion. In my mind, I could see Christ on the cross with the nails in His hands and feet and the blood flowing from His side. I felt a guilt for His death. I thought it was all my fault that He died on the cross. He had done nothing to deserve to die. I believed with all my heart that I would have given my life for Him at that time. Shortly after that, I felt the burden of the guilt lifted and peace came in its place. I didn't realize for sure what had happened until about two weeks later. My mother asked me if I was lost and I realized and told her that I had been saved on the night that I described above.

Louise McClanahan

1947

Mace's Hill

Age 18

On a Sunday morning in a little church on top of a hill in Macon County, I went up the hill a sinner but thanks to God, I came off the hill a saved person. Most of the ones that prayed for me have already gone. I will thank all of them one day in a better world.

Hilda Hines
Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church
Age 9

He Touched Me

He touched me three times...the first time was when I was only nine years old. It was while I was praying on the mourners' bench at Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church (my childhood home church) in Macon County, TN. It was during the revival Sunday service. Afterwards, I felt so cleaned up inside. The second time was when I saw our oldest son reveal to a lady at our Nashville, TN church that he had been saved. I can still see him gesture toward the altar as he wrapped his little arms around the evangelist preacher for a hug. The third time was during the Sunday night service of a later revival when our youngest son told us he had been saved. I had been so afraid our children would have a long struggle finding the Lord as I had sympathetically seen others do. I harbored that fear instead of faith in the Lord. I'll never forget that night when I said "Lord, if you'll save him, I'll be here praying no matter how long it takes." At that instant, he raised and professed he had just been saved. I don't know what all he had to give up but I realize that I had subconsciously let go of what I was holding on to.

The next day, all day long, I sang aloud and also under my breath, "He Touched Me, He Touched Me, He Touched Me, and oh the joy that floods my soul. Something happened and now I know, He Touched Me and made me whole." I am still singing it as I thank God also for a saved husband who has provided a peaceful home and for the recent profession of faith by our new beautiful daughter-in-law. Oh, how He continues to touch me.

Kelli Reddick
August 8, 1979
Mt. Calvary Missionary Baptist Church
Age 13

Bro. Paul Bryson was helping during the revival and Bro. Henry Smith was our pastor. I had been lost probably for several years. That night, Bro. Bryson preached about hell. There was not a dry eye in the house. When the altar call was given, my cousin started seeking the Lord on the very back row. (We were in the little house.) The conviction was so strong that I could not fight any longer. My grandmother was sitting next to me. All I had to do was look at her and she knew. Immediately, but what seemed like hours, I started to give up. As I was coming up, I felt peace. I still doubted my salvation off and on for years because I could not give one of those "brightening lights" experiences. Mt. Calvary finally built a church and tore the little house down. All that was left before the parking lot was completely paved was the sidewalk and some beautiful pink peony bushes. One night when someone was at the altar, I felt a horrible burden. I went outside to where the little house once stood. I walked on the sidewalk and asked God to please save me. It was then that I felt the peace and I knew everything was okay. Those peony bushes shined. Going back to my original place reminded me that "I had it!!"

Harold Petty

1956

Faith Baptist Church Mission on Nolensville Road

Age 14

I was saved when I was 14 years old when Faith Missionary Baptist Church was a mission on Nolensville Road. Bro. Robert Gregory came preaching the gospel as a mission from McFerrin. My mother had been taking me to Woodbine Baptist Church (Southern Baptist) which I had joined. She started attending the mission and brought me.

After hearing the gospel over a period of time and seeing people saved and testifying, I realized I did not have the same experience. I went to the altar to seek the Lord on several occasions and was finally saved. I did not accept it at first, probably because I expected more or something else. I allowed myself to be confused for many years; however I did not have a burden. I did not join the church until 1968 when I felt almost propelled from my seat to make this move to the Lord. After the birth of our daughter, my wife and I joined Faith Missionary Baptist Church at the same time. In October 1968, I was baptized by Bro. Howard Taylor. I've never regretted it.

Frank McClanahan
October
McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church
Age 21

The travel from nature to grace was an arduous travel for me. My mother asked me if I was lost in the revival meeting, first at Mace's Hill Missionary Baptist Church, when I was about nine years of age. I went to the altar out of some conviction perhaps, but also, because I was afraid of hellfire. Over the years, my parents prayed with me at home and took me to many revival meetings at the family home church, Goodwill Missionary Baptist Church, and elsewhere, almost every year, to Mace's Hill, Dixon Creek, East Main in Hartsville, McFerrin (when we were in the basement), and several other churches. I went to the altar most invitations, being sincere but also, went out of respect for my parents and the good church folk. I always desired to be saved, though. My mother and I moved to Nashville because of dire economic straits after my father passed away in 1953. At about the age of fifteen, I quit going to church until I was saved at 21 years of age on Thursday night during the October revival at McFerrin. In retrospect, my faith must have been weak during the intervening years until I was saved because I could never be willing to stay on the mourners' bench for a million years that the devil kept reminding me that I had to be willing to do. Therefore, I could not draw closer to God for deeper conviction and contrition, allowing me to repent and believe upon the Lord. Having quit attending church and becoming a much harder sinner upon living and working on many full and part-time jobs in Nashville, I was convicted of sin by remembering the Gospel and by being around various Christians, and requested of Bro. F. L. Ray to come to my home to pray for me. He came, prayed with me and invited me to come to McFerrin Church. I got to where I could hardly eat or sleep much and found my way to the church and the altar on that Thursday night of the revival. I couldn't hardly wait until the preacher quit preaching and went down to the altar in much trouble and sorrow. The devil put some of the same thoughts and obstacles on my mind, but the Lord gave me the conviction of sin and the grace of repentance and faith to press on beyond each hindrance of the devil as they were presented and seek the Lord. Even at one point, when feeling a spiritual coldness, I called that much more mightily upon the Lord, just as the blind beggar did. Then I was lifted up off the mourners' bench in a leap and felt that tremendous peace that flooded my soul. The peace

was so great that I felt that Heaven was so near that I could almost reach out and touch it. I came to realize how easy it was for the Lord to have saved me when it seemed so hard before. Thank God for all those preachers and Christians down through the years that prayed for and with me, and thanks to Bro. F. L. Ray for leading that old song, "Yes I Know I've Been Redeemed," on that eve right after I was saved. Most of all, I thank the Lord for His love of us all and the salvation that He so abundantly bestows on everyone, at all ages, who seek after Him with all their heart.

Lisa Wilkerson
May 1971
Fortland Baptist Church
Age 7

When I was seven years old, I realized I was lost and needed to be saved. I remember going to the altar and asking the Lord to save my soul. As a small child, I was humble and willing to turn it all over to Him if He would save me. I believe this is why it seemed so easy for me to be saved at a young age.

At the time I was saved, my older brother had not been saved. The following week he kept trying to convince me that I had not been saved. Although I knew God had saved me and I had that peace in my heart, my brother's constant questioning made me doubt my salvation. The next Sunday I made my way out of the pew and headed back to the altar. As I reached the altar, I was asking myself, "Why am I here? I have already been saved." That Sunday morning God reassured me of my salvation and that there was no reason to ever have doubts again.

Debbie Jones
July 1961
New Middle Fork Church
Age 10

I was saved during a revival at New Middle Fork Church in Scottsville, KY. I didn't tell anybody until I was eleven years old. A peaceful feeling came over me and I expected to get up shouting, so I sat there. I joined New Hope Church in 1962 and was baptized by my Daddy, Rev. Leonard Garmon.

Kay Lunsford
Sunday during the Summer of 1953
East Main Street Missionary Baptist Church
Age 8

It was on Sunday during a revival at East Main Street Missionary Baptist Church in Hartsville, TN. Mrs. Maryetta Oldham talked to me about being saved. Thank God for my loving parents that had taken me to church all my life. I knew the meaning of being separated from God and of salvation. It was preached and I grew up knowing that I would need God in my life. After she talked to me, my heart was broken and I had a burden like I had never had before. I went to the altar immediately and prayed for salvation. Several people came around me to pray, sing, and talk to me about my soul.

After church, several people went home with us for lunch. The children went outside to play. I can remember not wanting to play, afraid I might have an accident and die. I knew I was separated from God. Salvation was on my mind and heart. On the way back to church that night, my parents talked to me. After an altar call, several friends and relatives talked to me. I thought it would make me feel better or be of some comfort—it did not satisfy me. Only God redeemed me. He eased the grief and peace and joy came into my heart. I stood up, felt warm inside, and a smile came over my face. There have been some doubts about my salvation; but, it was at a time when I was not close to the Lord. I have never felt like going back to the altar to pray for salvation. The peace and joy in my heart has grown stronger each day. I am so thankful the Lord looked down on me through His kindness, love, and mercy and saved me on my second time to the altar.

Now I am married and have two sons. The Lord has saved both of them. I could not have made it through the troubled times without my Lord. Each day I am thankful for His love, grace, understanding, and patience He has shown me and my family.

Edward Logsdon
In a Catholic Church

I was saved as a young boy while sitting in a pew listening to a sermon about "Heaven and hell" at a Catholic Church. Something happened to me that day that changed my life forever. I had for the first time a fear of the Lord and knew I didn't want to go to hell. I had to truly repent of my sin. God saved me that day.

Since the Catholic Church teaches that you can lose your salvation, I drifted for the next 20 years fearing death from sin until I met my wife. Her family attended McFerrin and her mother, Annie Gregory, was very persistent about being in church. My children needed to be in church. It was there that I heard the true gospel for the first time. It became extremely difficult to sit in church Sunday after Sunday as I knew that I had to tell my salvation experience and be baptized. My wife joined the church one Sunday and the next Sunday I could not bear to sit there any longer, I sprang from my seat and joined the church and we were both baptized on the same day.

Judy Logsdon

Mid 1970

At Home

Age early 30's

As a small child, I attended several revivals and had gone to the altar a couple of times. I didn't fully understand why I was going and I didn't like anyone talking to me about my salvation, so around the age of 10, my cousin and I joined the Church but neither of us were saved. It didn't take long to regret what I had done because the Lord started to deal with me hard and heavy. I prayed for my salvation daily but could not find peace. I had such a heavy burden on my heart.

Since no one knew that I wasn't saved, I was the only one praying for my salvation. I kept thinking there was no such thing as salvation but the people at church would get up and testify and I knew they had to feel something. I was unable to carry this burden alone any longer, so I told my husband. In a couple of weeks, I came in from work one day and was alone in the house. I walked into the bedroom to the end of the bed, dropped to my knees and totally surrendered my heart to Him. Immediately, I had a marvelous peace rush through my body. He had taken this terrible burden from my heart and saved my soul.

Phyllis Franklin
January 1957
Pennsylvania Avenue Missionary Baptist Church
Age 10

When I was ten years old, I began attending Pennsylvania Avenue Missionary Baptist Church from time to time. My parents did not go to church so I was taken by an uncle sometimes and by cousins and friends. One Sunday night after service, I got to the door of the church to leave and I started to cry. I didn't know what was wrong until my uncle asked me if I was lost. At that moment I knew. My uncle and those still at church bowed along with me and we prayed. After an hour or so, I stopped crying and realized that I was lying face down on the floor. I became aware of those around me still praying but something within me was different—I wasn't scared. My uncle realized that I had stopped praying and asked me if I had been saved and I realized that I was.

My salvation did not come like I expected. Instead of great excitement, I simply felt peace. The devil has used the simplicity of my salvation against me often, but I finally realized that salvation comes to us all in our own special way. Salvation comes from the same source to each and everyone, but we react differently.

Henrietta Pappas
Dixon Creek Baptist Church
Age 11

I was saved at Dixon Creek Baptist Church in October. Thanks to my grandmother, Alice Holder, she always took us to church. My Dad died while we were all little kids. Mom came to Nashville with my Aunt Mable and Uncle Ivan McClanahan to get a job and make us a living. I will never forget the day. There was an old lady that always wore a long dress down to her ankles and she was praying for me when I got saved. Thanks for her, too. But thank God most of all for saving my soul.

David Logsdon

Old Church

Age 12

We were having a revival. We had gone every night that week and Mrs. Taylor was next to me on this particular night. I had an empty feeling that terrified me. I knew Jesus was the only one who could relieve this feeling. I prayed until I felt relief of that terrible feeling and raised up and I knew God had saved my soul.

Betty Revercomb
August 1959
New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church
Age 13

When I walked into church on the first Sunday night of our revival in 1959, I was just a young girl with hardly a care in the world. Midway through the sermon, I had been convicted, sentenced, and condemned to a certain death! Each time Brother Birdwell mentioned the word “sinner,” he looked directly at me. I wanted to shout at him and tell him not to look my way. I was good; I minded my parents; I had never been in trouble. But still—he turned my way and oh, those black eyes penetrated to the depths of my soul as he condemningly said the name, “Sinner!” He knew something that even my dearest, closest friend, my mother, did not know. Three years earlier when all my friends had gotten saved, I, too, had told everyone I was saved. I really didn’t make it up; I just decided in my mind that everything was okay. How could this man know my condition?

Now, I know, God was using Brother Birdwell to speak to my heart, to give me another chance. Praise His Holy Name! Had it not been for His love and immeasurable mercy, I would have died in my sins!

Sadly that night I bargained with God. I was too proud to let anyone know of my condition, so I promised God if He’d let me get home, I’d tell Mama, and then I’d get saved. Well, you can imagine, away from church, away from Brother Birdwell’s condemning black eyes, I felt fine, and the devil began to do his work. He told me people would know I was a liar! Every night of our revival I bargained with the Lord, and today, almost forty years later, I shudder at what I did! How many times He could have snuffed out my life and sentenced me to that eternal hell. Praise Him for His love; He gave me even one more chance.

On Friday night, a young married woman came to the altar proclaiming that she was lost. As I stood looking down on her, the tears began to flow uncontrollably, and I realized they weren’t for her, but for me because I was too proud to kneel. I knew then that God had given me a sign—one I couldn’t deny. If this grownup woman wasn’t ashamed to kneel, surely, I, a young girl, shouldn’t be either. I did make it back to my mother in the back of the church. She didn’t have anything to do with saving me, but at her feet I found the Lord. It only took a few minutes, because finally, the bargaining had stopped, and I had come His way...stripped of my pride. Praise His Holy Name!

Daniel Revercomb

May 1983

Home

Age 42

The Lord has always been with me. He gave me Betty Jo who was religious and strong enough to get me to go to church, and He gave me a heart attack to nudge me in the right direction! Until I had the “big one,” I was always able to block out what would happen to me when I died. I knew I would go to hell, but it was okay, because I was able to block it out. Hey, I had a good thing going...if I didn't like something, I would just block it out. So, the good Lord gave me something I couldn't block out, and after my heart attack in September, I began searching for that inner peace. I began reading and studying, and I started going to church on a regular basis. I guess I still had some reluctance, because it took another eight months before I found my answer. The good Lord saved my soul in the middle of the night while I was home in my bed. I talked to Brother Vanderpool the next night, which was Wednesday night prayer meeting. I was baptized on the following Sunday which just happened to be Mother's Day.

Doug Franklin
May 1980
Front steps of old church
Age 30

I knew I was lost and every time I came to the old church building, I knew that I didn't have that peace that I saw in other faces. I had told the Lord that I wanted to be saved but I just couldn't go up in front of all those people and give my testimony. I had prayed, Lord, take this burden away and I'll do whatever it takes and on the way up the steps of the church, the Lord saved my soul and I couldn't wait to get up front to tell the church. Through all the troubles in my life, I've had that peace to comfort me and guide me. Thank you, Lord.

Wendell Ray
October 1942
Alabama
Age 22

I was raised in sight of a Missionary Baptist Church. I had heard Bro. Cap Massey and Bro. Cal. Gregory preach, but it didn't have much effect on me until in 1942 when I was in the Army in Alabama. There was a revival going on at Defeated Creek Baptist Church where my wife was a member. She requested prayer for me. They were working on that end and the Lord was working on the other end. That is where the Lord spoke peace to my soul. I joined McFerrin Baptist Church and was baptized by Bro. F. L. Ray in Mansker Creek in October 1955.

Karin Travis
December 31, 1962
Faith Missionary Baptist Church, Detroit, MI
Age 8

I was saved at a young age. I was lucky in that I was brought up in a Christian family and was brought to church all my life. I fell under conviction and was saved in the same night. Our church was performing a play called "Judgment Day." They portrayed people on judgment day and how they were turned out of Heaven. I knew at that moment that if I died I would not make it into Heaven.

I, as a child, didn't know much about my sins, but I did know that I had to trust with all my heart in the Savior for my salvation. I was saved that night and found "peace" that has always been with me and that always will be through eternity.

Eleanor Brawner
3rd Friday in August 1940
Walnut Hill Baptist Church
Age 15

The Lord saved my soul the third Friday night in August 1940 during a revival at Walnut Hill Baptist Church, Bells (Crockett County), Tennessee. I had been under conviction and fighting it all week. By Friday night, I could fight it no longer. I surrendered to His call and have never been sorry. The revival lasted two weeks and I believe 20 or 21 people were saved, joined the church, and were baptized.

Willie Canter
August 1927
Willette Baptist Church (Macon County)
Age 12

I was saved in August of 1927 on a Saturday night. I joined the church on Sunday and was baptized by Bro. Jim McDonald. The Lord has been good to me. I thank Him for my salvation. I thank Him for watching over me. I couldn't go on without the Lord.

Leigh Ann Howard
October 5, 1992
McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church
Age 23

When I was 10 years old, I told I was saved. I went on to join the church and was baptized. When I was 20 years old, I realized I wasn't saved, but I thought I could run from God. I just knew I could get by without Him. I thought it would be easy. My family, friends, and church members thought I was saved. I thought if I didn't talk about it or think about it, it wouldn't bother me. The harder I tried, the harder it was to hide. Kevin and I had been dating for a couple of years and had been talking about marriage and at the same time my sister and Kevin's sister were both expecting. During our revival, there had already been 3 or 4 saved that night. The singing seemed to pierce my soul as shouting chipped away at the wall I had built around it. I realized that night I couldn't leave that building without God in my life. I couldn't go on with that pain in my heart and I just didn't know what kind of aunt or wife I could be if I didn't know the Lord. Everyone was up front when Kevin came back and sat by me. He wasn't the only one who sat by me. The Lord sat with me and offered His comfort. I finally accepted His comfort and was comforted with a peace like I had never known before. This all happened just 3 days after my 23rd birthday. I can't imagine a better birthday gift in all my life. In the 5 years since my salvation, the Lord has never left my side, although I have left His from time to time. He is always there with the peace and comfort He so freely gives. And it is so reassuring to know He will always be with me.

Izette Oldham
Friday 1928
Meadorville Baptist Church
Age 12

The Lord came down with such sweet peace, I did not shout but God sure gave me peace and I have never doubted it. I joined the church on a Saturday night and I felt like I could fly away and on March 28, 1948, I joined McFerrin. The Lord told me if I would, He would save my son and during the first revival in 1948, He was saved and the other one was saved in 1966. Thank God for all the blessings He has given me. I could not live without the Lord.

Destiny Simmons

July 3, 2006

At home in bed

Age 12

When I was lost I felt like no one wanted me and I knew that I was going to hell. Then I felt like someone hit me and put pressure on my heart and it hurt and I said "Lord save me" over and over then the feeling was gone. I felt so happy and I knew where I was going, to Heaven.

Vondell Powell
November 1948
McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church
Age 16

My friends, Naomi and Helen Webb, Willie Mai Hargis, and my sister, Dot Garrett asked me to go to church with them. I'm so glad I did. Bro. Henry Smith had visited their parents. The Webb and Hargis families brought us to church or we rode the city bus from Charlotte Avenue across town. I went to the altar for months but one night I decided I had to get saved or stay there all night. The next thing I remember I was shaking hands with Bro. Henry Smith and telling him I was saved. It was a glorious night which I am very thankful for. I joined the church that night. I thank God for McFerrin and what it has meant to me down through the years--all the pastors and all the good people that are members. Remember me and my family in your prayers and I will remember you. God Bless each one of you.

Andy Jones
October 1990
McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church
Age 10

I was saved on a Monday night during the annual fall revival. I was watching people get saved all around me when I realized I was under conviction myself. I got on my knees where I was sitting and began to pray. Several people talked to me, like Mrs. Taylor and Brother Jimmy Roberts, trying to lead me to the Lord. Once I realized I had to give everything up, the Lord saved my soul. I felt a peace that I will always remember.

Becky Jones Neely

October 1992

McFerrin

Age 10

I was saved during the winter revival when I was 10. I had felt like I had needed to be saved for awhile, but was too shy to go to the front of the church and pray. Finally, one night during the revival, I went to the front pew and began praying. Everyone had told me that if I believed in Him with all of my heart, He would save my soul. I cried and prayed for what seemed like an eternity. Then, all of a sudden I felt a peace, like I didn't need to pray anymore, because He had saved my soul. I am forever grateful to God for saving my soul.

Wayne Jones
Our Home in East Nashville
Age 10 ½

Our merciful Lord and Savior heard my earnest prayer one night while I lay in my bed begging Him to save my soul. Although He has heard and answered countless prayers since that night, I realize that if He hadn't heard that one, all the others would have been in vain. I try to thank Him each and every day for saving my soul, for saving my children, for Christian parents, for good health, and all the other blessings He has granted me in my life.

Kelsey Moore
July 28, 1996
McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church
Age 9

It was during the revival and Brother Brown had given a call to come to the altar and pray. I told my mom I had a burden. She said, "Do you want to pray here in your seat or at the altar"? I said, "My seat." But, for some reason I just got up and went to the altar. After awhile, a light shone over me and I felt much better. "HE saved me."

Sherry Hessey
Sunday, September 1971
Parkwood Missionary Baptist Church
Age 10

“HE touched me”! Praise God. The exact date, the exact time I do not know. What I do know is HE touched me on a Sunday. I grew up in a Missionary Baptist Church. All my life I had been taught about salvation. This particular Sunday my mother, grandmother, and I visited Parkwood Missionary Baptist Church. Brother Eugene Brown delivered a message to the lost. During that service I realized I was lost. Brother Brown gave the altar call and I couldn’t stop crying. I was lost. I made my way to the altar. I prayed for a long time and felt I would never be saved. But, I decided I would not leave until I was at peace with the Lord. At some point during my prayer I blocked out everything around me. It was me praying and I hoped the Lord was listening. All at once I felt the Lord touch my left shoulder. At that moment I felt peace and I knew HE had saved me. I was so excited the Lord had touched me; I jumped up and announced “HE touched me”! It wasn’t until that moment that I realized Brother Brown’s daughters and Mrs. Brown was singing the song *Somebody Touched Me*. We left church and everything looked different to me. I felt such relief and peace. Two Sundays later I was baptized. If the Lord saved me, then He will save anyone who comes to Him. HE will give you Peace in your own special way.

PRAISE GOD AND THANK YOU SWEET JESUS FOR SALVATION!

June Whittemore

1949

McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church

Age 12

I was saved when I was twelve years old at the altar at McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church. Bro. Henry Smith preached that night and at the closing of his sermon, he gave an altar call. I went with a heavy burden, calling on the Lord with all my heart and begging Him to save me. He did! My burden was gone and everything seemed so bright.

Thank you Lord for what you did for me that night and for all the blessings I've received since that time.

Virginia Wilmore

August 18, 1928

Long Fork Church

Age 13

I was saved at Long Fork Missionary Baptist Church. Bro. N. C. Fuqua was the pastor. He preached a sermon that convicted me. I went to the altar on a Thursday night. I didn't get saved that night but on Saturday morning at home, I went into the garage to pray but didn't get my prayer through. We went to church that day and I went to the altar and I prayed through. I didn't join the church until a year later. I was baptized on a Sunday afternoon, August 20, 1929.

I thank the Lord for saving my soul. I am thankful for being a member of McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church.

Susan Gifford
August 1975
New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church
Age 11

My salvation does not involve seeing stars or jumping up and down but it is very special to me. It was during a revival at New Bethel in August 1975. As we kids sat together as usual, it was time for that altar call once more. Bro. Sammy Parker came to me and ask if I was lost. With tears in my eyes, I said yes and went straight to the altar. I prayed for several nights until that one night I remember telling my Mama that all of a sudden I just couldn't cry anymore. I didn't shout or see stars but just had that sweet peace. That was the special moment for me when I was 11 years old. The devil has tried to question my salvation over the years but the Lord has always given me that reassuring peace in my heart. I am so thankful for my salvation.

Eld. Eugene Brown

January 1952

Detroit, MI

Age 22

I had a deep interest in being saved since my early youth, but like most people, I desired to sow some “wild oats” as the saying goes. Within the first year of our marriage, there was a sudden death in my wife’s family that troubled me very much. This put me to seriously thinking about death. This also brought about my attending a revival meeting shortly thereafter. The revival was in the winter time and a distance of 50 miles from Detroit, MI where I lived. During the course of the night I attended, a simple little lady came directly to me and said “Son, are you a Christian?” God directed this lady to me because it had an effect on me to the extent that I could not rest, go to bed, or do anything. I thought I was dying and called for a medical doctor. The doctor came, but before he got there, I had to do something. I made an attempt to pray and ask God for His mercy. God granted me mercy and lifted that deep load of conviction and trouble I had on my heart. When the doctor arrived, the problem had already been solved. I had no more condemnation—I was a new man. God did in one minute what I had tried to do on my own for many years.

Thank God for heartfelt salvation.

Melissa Jenkins

July 1984, Tuesday Night of Revival
Pleasant Hill Missionary Baptist Church
(3rd pew back from pulpit on the right hand
side coming from the entrance of the church.)
Age 14

My family arrived at church late on Monday night of the revival and there was not an empty seat in the back of the church, and my mother had wanted me to sit with her instead of sitting with my friends that night, so I went to sit up front with her. I was not afraid of sitting up front. I had grown up in church and enjoyed church.

That night Bro. Ronnie Harrison preached about “No Guarantee of Tomorrow and About the Reality of hell.” He also preached about the gulf that separates a sinner from the Lord. While he preached, the Word of God and God’s Spirit called to me and told me that this was truth, that I didn’t know God, that there was a gulf of sin and unbelief and the world between me and God. The Spirit and the Word came and sat on my heart and knocked at my heart. My heart had never felt this way. It was a call to believe the truth. It was a call to repent. It was the greatest “awakening” and conviction of truth/reality I have ever experienced. It seemed as though everyone in the room could hear my heart beat. It seemed as though truth and justice were a breath away. The truth was that God is real, that Jesus truly gave His life, and also that He would return. The justice was that I deserved to go to hell and that any minute God could come back and that justice would be poured upon me. As this truth and justice showered anguishing reality to my heart and soul, the Spirit of God brought to mind Mercy. Mercy—God gave His only begotten Son so that whoever would believe in Him would not perish but would have eternal life. The Spirit also called me to surrender all (the world, my knowledge, security in this life) and come to the cross.

Bro. Harrison finished the sermon. I tried to hide this heartfelt reality behind a song. Bro. Harrison saw the affects of God’s Spirit on my countenance, so he came and asked me to come to the altar to pray. I gave in and went to the altar. I thought going to the altar would be enough, and I thought the praying and prayers of others (those who saw me grow up) would be enough. But the anguish and emptiness would not leave. I had heard others tell of peace and not to stop seeking till the peace of true salvation had come. So I went home that night still seeking that peace. I

could not sleep that night. I tossed in the bed, believing that God's designated day of His return would be that night or the next day and I would not be saved. I prayed and prayed. Finally in sheer exhaustion, I asked God to please not come back yet, allow me one more day to seek and find Him.

The sun rose and I was so thankful. I tried praying throughout the day but there was still no peace. As we entered the church for the Tuesday night service, I became even more empty and anguished in my heart. We sang several songs and we bowed our heads for prayer before the service began. I couldn't wait for the prayer to begin, because I was in despair and needed so desperately to try to reach the throne again.

As I prayed I saw myself at the foot of the cross. The vision of Christ there was so real. I said "Lord, I have done everything I know to do. I know that You are real, that You came and died for me. I believe that You love me enough to take this emptiness and fear in my heart away. I know that there is nothing I can do, that you have the power to save me. God, I don't have anything to give to You. There is probably not one thing I will ever do that is good but God I know that I need You more than anything else. God take my life the next minute, but save me now."

And when I gave Him my all, He saved me. Peace came in my heart. That emptiness, heaviness, and separation was no longer there. There is truly a peace that passes all understanding—and that night I was given that peace and it is still with me.

Debbie “Delane” Shores

October 4, 1976

McFerrin Church

Age 18

During the Fall revival, I asked God to forgive me of all my sins. A peace came over my heart and I felt relief. The next morning everything looked brighter. Since that day, the Lord and I have had a close relationship. I have prayed for His help and guidance many times and felt He has showed me signs of which direction to go. He has always provided for my family everything we needed and much more. My heart is overwhelmed when I try to thank Him for everything He has done for me, because I could never thank Him enough.

Steven L. Shores

June 1973

At home in bed

Age 14

It was at the summer revival that I went to the altar to seek Jesus but something was in my way. I had been seeking Jesus for about 2 years and was getting tired of being lost, so one night of that revival; I came down to terms that I had to be saved now. I prayed all the way home from church and when I went to bed, I prayed for what seemed like an hour or so, then peace came over me and I went to sleep. The next day on the way to church, it seemed like a brighter richer color was on everything and the people at church looked so good. When the preacher gave the altar call that night, I didn't have that heart-pounding fear, but I went to the altar anyway but it was different. The next night, I didn't go to the altar and Sister Kathy Powell joined the church and when the people went up to shake her hand, I had this strong feeling to go shake hands with her. This is when I made it known I was saved. I joined the church and was baptized by Bro. A. G. Gregory in Old Hickory Lake. Thank you Jesus.

Virginia Reid
July 1939
Mace's Hill Missionary Baptist Church
Age 12

I was saved one night during the July revival at Mace's Hill Missionary Baptist Church in 1939 when I was 12 years old. I had been going to the altar about two years after realizing I was lost, but was unable to truly repent and have faith in the Lord until that night when peace came into my heart. I have never doubted the fact that I was saved. I was brought up in a Christian home and sat under the preaching of Bro. Calvin Gregory as pastor and Bro. F. W. Lambert and others as helpers in the revivals. I appreciate very much the opportunity of being brought up where the truth was preached and practiced. I wish the whole world knew Jesus.

Mary Sue Pomeroy

1952

McFerrin

Age 10

During a revival at McFerrin Baptist Church, with Bro. F. L. Ray as a preacher during this revival, I realized I was lost. A lady came and asked me if I would like to go to the altar to pray so I went. I didn't get saved that night. The next day, I went to school with it still on my mind. I felt so sick I asked my teacher if I could go to the clinic, so she let me go. As I walked down the steps, I met another girl going to the clinic. She asked me what was wrong with me. I told her there was nothing they could do for me in the clinic. When we both arrived at the clinic there was only one bed available, so they put her in it and took me to the teachers' lounge. I was in there all day by myself. Someone came and asked if I wanted lunch but I was so sick at heart I couldn't eat. I prayed all day long. That night when I went to church, I went to the altar again. There was a point in time where no one seemed to be in the room but me and the Lord. My burden was then gone. When I looked up and said I was saved my father shouted. He looked ten feet tall to me at that moment and, to this day, I can still see him as he was that night.

Dorothy Covington Garrett

1948

McFerrin Church

Age 18

My mother and father were both Baptist and I didn't know of any other denomination until we moved to Nashville. In the summer of 1941, my sister and I started going to Immanuel Nazareth Church with our neighbors, Willie Mae Hargis, who later became our sister-in-law, and Helen and Naomi Webb. We all loved to go to that little church and attended it for four or five years. When these families were invited to McFerrin, we started going with them in 1948. I didn't know until then what I had to do to be saved and become a Baptist. I heard the testimonies and what God had done for these people and I wanted that salvation. I was under conviction and went to the altar every time I could. One Sunday morning I went to the altar and the Lord reached out His arms and I trusted Him and He saved my soul. It was peace in my heart and soul. I didn't tell it at church that morning. The first people I told was the Webb family. My sister was saved a few weeks later and we were baptized by Bro. Henry Smith in the early spring of 1949. Our brother was saved that year also. We were very happy and are all still at McFerrin. Thank God for His blessings.

Julie Shores Howard

June 1987

Old McFerrin Church

Age 12

I was saved the first Sunday night of the June revival. I was sitting half way back in the church and Bro. Massey was preaching. I felt this unexplainable pain and guilt in my heart. My parents were sitting next to me and I told Daddy how I felt and he told me to start praying and then within about 2 minutes, I was filled with such joy I could hardly sit there anymore, but Daddy told me just to sit there until the preaching was over. I did, but when the preacher was through, I stood up and told everyone. That was a big blessing also.

Lisa Whitley
November 1979
The Old McFerrin Church
Age 18

I was a small child going to church with my grandfather on holidays, and during revivals I noticed what he had in his heart and realized that someday I could have the same. I prayed that when I grew up I would have a Christian home and be part of a family that worshipped God. My prayers have been answered. The man I married introduced me to the church that I am so proud to be a part of.

It was the second Sunday of the Fall Revival in 1979 when God saved my soul. Brother Howard Taylor preached the sermon that took me to the altar that day. God sent Sister Laura Shoulders to lead the way. As I sat down on the bench with my dear sweet father-in-law at my side, he began to pray with me. It didn't take long for me to get the Peace I had wanted for some time. For the next two weeks I don't think my feet touched the ground.

Shortly after that, I went back to the old way of living and began to question my salvation. I don't think I have ever been so confused or had such heartache. After talking with family and friends, I realized that God had saved my soul and the only perfect thing in this world is His love. I am so thankful for it. As I grow older, each day becomes sweeter.

Nordean S. Copas

1947

In my car between Gallatin and Hendersonville

I was raised in a Christian home and was required to attend Sunday School and Church, but that did not make me a Christian. Although it made me realize that I needed Christ in my life. Prior to my conversion, my life was spared the three years I spent in the Army during World War II. My Mother was very persistent in talking to me concerning my soul's condition. In the year of 1947, I do not remember the month or the day, but I do remember the place being in the vicinity of where the city limits of Gallatin and Hendersonville meet on Gallatin Road. On returning from taking my Mother home to Tompkinsville, KY, I became very concerned about my soul's condition. My Mother said very little to me on her way home. My thoughts were, "Has my Mother given up on me? Was it possible that I would never be saved? Maybe I am saved, although that burden was still there." I began talking to the Lord and said to Him, "I am going to start singing 'Amazing Grace,' if I have been saved let me know it." After the first sentence I knew I was not saved. At that moment, I fully trusted Him and that burden was removed. A song came to my mind and I began singing, "When I am cast down in Spirit and Soul He Whispers Sweet Peace to Me." I stopped my car and got down on my knees in the car and thanked God for saving my soul.

Jane Pappas

Age 10

The summer I would turn ten, right after school had let out for the year, I starting feeling scared and almost panicked. I soon realized this was what “feeling lost” was like. I would sneak off to my bedroom to kneel and pray and would feel better for a few minutes. But then that heaviness returned, and I would go back again to pray. Feeling no relief, I sat down at our piano and started to play a hymn, singing the words to “In the Garden”. When I reached the part where the song says, “And He walks with me and He talks with me, and He tells me I am His own,” I was filled with joy and peace and realized God had saved me. Unfortunately, I began to doubt even before I was baptized. For years I was so afraid I had not been saved, and prayed for God to show me where I stood. I was at a revival service when I was 15 years old and a good friend of mine was on the altar praying. I stayed on my pew in the back of the church and prayed for him as intensely as I could ever remember. When I heard the shout that he had been saved, I was flooded with an incredible joy. I didn’t even realize I was walking down the aisle with tears streaming down my face. God let me know I *had* been saved my 10th summer by blessing me with a profound experience! I’ve never doubted my salvation again. Thank you, Lord!

Carol Shores Crone
October 12, 1975
McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church
Age 12

We were having a revival in the fall. We had been going to church all week. I had never really felt like I was lost. I had gone to the altar one time when I was around seven or eight, but was not really lost. On the way home from church on Saturday night, my dad talked to me about my condition. It seemed like we would never get home.

The next day in Sunday School class, I started feeling strange. As we moved into the Sunday service, the Spirit of the Lord was there in a mighty way. People were shouting and singing all over the church. As I sat there on the bench, I started to tremble and felt like my heart could burst. A good friend, Elizabeth Ezell, who was sitting next to me asked if I felt like going to the altar. That was all it took and I was on my way in search of God.

All I can remember is asking God to save me and it seemed as if no one else was there. I could not hear the singing or anything around me. Then, I felt a peace come over me and I could no longer cry. Everyone around me seemed to have a glow. As a twelve year old, I had never experienced the awesome power of the Lord.

I was baptized in Old Hickory Lake on October 19, 1975. I praise the Lord for all that He has done for me and for giving me Christian parents that made sure I had the opportunity to know Him.

Tommy Norris
June 1985
McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church
Age 24

I was not raised in church as a child. When Carol and I married, I started coming to McFerrin with her. I had never been taught what it meant to be lost or saved.

We were at church on a revival Sunday in June. Brother Howard Taylor was the pastor. While he was speaking about being saved, my heart started beating fast and I felt like something was wrong. Sister Taylor came over and spoke to me and then began to pray. I also began to pray. I'm not sure how much time went by, but I then felt happy and my heart was okay. I joined the church that day and was later baptized in the church's baptistry.

Tommy R. Norris
July 30, 1994
McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church
Age 12

My mom carried me to the revival we were having at church. I felt like I might be lost, but did not say anything to anyone. My mom would talk to me on the way home from church, but I would not say anything to her about how I felt.

On Saturday night, my dad was off work and was able to come to church. My dad asked me if I felt lost and told me that I should pray. So, I did. I remember my dad, mom, uncle, and granddad being there and talking to me. Someone said something to me about going up to the altar. I was busy praying in my seat. Then, I felt joy. The first person I saw was Brother Massey. I remember hugging him and he asked me if I wanted to join the church. I was baptized on Sunday night in the baptistry with some other people.

Jana Litton
August 1978
At Home
Age 11

I was 11 years old and had been attending New Bethel all my life. It was the week before the revival and I can remember feeling “strange.” I dreaded going to bed at night because I felt as though I would go to sleep and never wake up again. That feeling left me burning in hell and that was one place I knew I didn’t want to go. One night, I went to bed and couldn’t go to sleep because of the burden I was carrying. I wanted to be saved. I cried and cried and begged and begged God to save me; to forgive me of my sins and to let me become a Christian. This went on for what seemed like hours but really wasn’t. After praying for a while, I remember taking a deep breath and not feeling the need to beg or cry anymore. At that very moment, I knew I was saved. What a WONDERFUL feeling!

Willadeane (Deane) Webb

October 1955

Ivy Chapel Baptist Church

Age 16

My sister, brother, and I were raised at Monroe Harding Children's Home, a home run by the Presbyterian Churches. We went to Monroe Harding in 1947 when I was 7 years old and I stayed there until I was 15 years old. After my sister married in 1954 and my brother went into the Air Force, I went to live with my dad's sister. My aunt lived across the street from Ivy Chapel Baptist Church. We had attended the Presbyterian Sunday School and Church every Sunday. After I moved, I could walk across the street to Sunday School and Church. In the Presbyterian church I had never heard the term "being saved." Ivy Chapel had a revival and I really enjoyed the services. I heard what it took to be saved. I went to the altar and prayed for the Lord to save me. I was saved during that fall revival in October 1955. I joined the church and was baptized. When I was 17, I met Hollis and we dated. While we were dating, Hollis asked me one day if I had ever been saved. Before I could answer, he said, I don't mean are you a member of a church? Have you been saved? I told him yes, I was saved when I was 16 years old at the altar at Ivy Chapel. McFerrin had always been Hollis' home church and we attended church while we dated and after we married. After we married, one Sunday morning when an opportunity for members was given, I went up and joined McFerrin. I was received on a credit of a letter from Ivy Chapel Baptist Church. About 5 or 6 years later, I heard a sermon about alien immersion and was afraid my baptism was not scriptural. This also made me doubt my salvation. I prayed about this at great length and was convinced my salvation was real. As a result of this sermon, I was certain that I needed to be baptized by the right authority. I told the church of my feelings. I was baptized by Bro. Arnett Gregory and have been sure of my salvation and my baptism ever since. I thank God that I have been saved and a member of McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church, the true church. I am so thankful that I have a Christian home and both of our children have been saved.

Janis Wilmore
September 1969
Church
Age 12

It was an unseasonably cool Sunday in September 1969. I had worn a tweed wool blazer to church that day to keep me warm. As hard as I have tried, I can't remember the date, but the day I shall never forget. I had turned 12 a few months earlier. At 12 years old by my parents' definition, I was a "very good girl" who "gave no trouble." It was rare for me to be disciplined. Well, if I was such a good girl, why did I feel so bad and so troubled that day. I felt it all through Sunday School and through the church service but I didn't know why. I went home after church and began talking with my Grandmother about my feelings. She knew immediately what the problem was. We got down on our knees in the living room and we prayed. We talked and prayed, talked and prayed and soon I, too, knew what my feeling of being lost earlier in the day was all about. Yes, I was lost, not bad. I was suddenly overwhelmed with a sensation that is beyond description, it is the sensation you experience when you seek the Lord and you find Him. It is a sudden peace that radiates from within you and out. Until that moment, I had not "known Him" even though I knew all about Him. I attended church regularly and knew a lot about the Bible. I didn't know the Lord because we had not had that personal one on one experience that you have when you "get the Lord into your heart and soul." Before that, He didn't dwell in my heart; I didn't know that He would be there with me through all of life's trials and tribulations; I wasn't sure what would happen to me when I died; I feared death. That moment...the experience I had just undergone had literally changed my life "for eternity." That night I returned to church with a new peace of mind and when the altar call was given I came forward and told them about what had happened that day. The church rejoiced with me and shortly thereafter I was baptized.

Ingo Breuer
Spring 1995

During a vacation in Spain back in 1994, I was inspired to pray to the Lord due to the consistent pressure of personal trouble and a feeling of utter emptiness in my heart. I was a person who never had many friends and I never felt accepted in social gatherings at school or other places. Therefore, I was acquainted with the dreary impression of loneliness and rejection.

At that time, I wasn't saved nor had any knowledge of the Scriptures. I realized that I had no peace in my heart, so while I was alone in the hotel room in Spain I began to pray to God. In this prayer I poured out my heart to Him and expressed my desire to learn about the Christian life and what I must do to be a Christian. I must emphasize again that back then I had no understanding of the Bible and the work of Jesus.

Now I began to seek the Lord with all my heart and I am convinced that God helped me during this time. A number of influential coincidences occurred after returning home from Spain. I became familiar with Worldwide Christian Radio—an international radio station from Nashville, TN—and I started listening to their programs regularly. Just by accident I met a group of young Christians in a shopping mall in the city of Cologne. They explained to me some of the plan of salvation and encouraged me to read the Bible. More and more I desired to study God's Word, but it was still very difficult for me to really understand what the Bible had to say. I also began to pray regularly. But I was never sure whether I was saved or not. I was full of doubts. I still felt convicted as a sinner. I had so many questions about Christian faith, but there was nobody who could answer me. Moreover, I discovered that a large number of radio preachers on Worldwide Christian Radio preached contradicting and vague doctrines concerning salvation, which added to my doubts.

I asked myself what I must do to have a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus? How do I know for sure that I am saved? These questions continued to puzzle my mind. I have to emphasize that I didn't know any other Christians in Germany who could help me in this struggle. I live in a part of Germany that is mainly Catholic. Germany is characterized by spiritual apostasy. Most people have no respect for the Bible and they don't care about what Jesus has done. So, if I had asked other people to help me understand about the plan of salvation and the wonderful work of Jesus, they sure would have laughed me to scorn. Even Germany's

government supported Protestant churches (Lutheran) have no evangelical statement of faith and they no longer support a Biblical world view.

But during this time of doubting, there was another coincidence God brought into my life. One day I turned on the TV and to my surprise there was a news report by a very liberal news magazine about Baptist churches in Tennessee. While the news report slanderously accused Baptists as being “anachronistic,” “bigoted,” and “prude,” I discovered that those Baptist people honestly and actively obeyed the Word of God. Since I was so positively impressed by the simple and pure faith of those Baptist people—being so viciously vilified by our German news journalists—I tried to listen to Baptist radio programs on Worldwide Christian Radio. The one program that touched me the most was Bro. Eugene Brown’s “Words of Hope” program. Through his preaching I realized that it takes simple, childlike faith in Jesus Christ to be saved and that we do NOT earn our salvation by good works. I also realized that repentance and faith were essential to receive God’s gift of salvation by grace. Brother Brown usually ends his radio message with an invitation to say a word of prayer with him. That was important for me because by our prayers we express our dependence upon God. Humble prayer is worth so much more than the pride of theological knowledge. It was during one of those prayers that I felt a change. **John 3:16** was the verse of Scripture that was continually on my mind. *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* It was such a wonderful joy when I realized that this promise was for ME. I have this wonderful promise because Christ went to Calvary to pay with His own blood for me. I cannot tell how it really happened, but I realized that my doubts and the feeling of being convicted of sin were gone. Suddenly I felt the burning desire to tell others about Jesus, the forgiveness of sin and His sacrifice on the cross. I never had this feeling before. Like never before in my life I had a hunger for God’s Word. At this time, I began to study the Scriptures daily (**Acts 17:11**). Many of my habits and opinions changed in a short time (**Ephesians 4:22, 23, Romans 12:2**). All this happened during the spring of 1995.

Finally, I want to say that since my New Birth through God’s wonderful grace, Jesus has been a friend to me ***that sticketh closer than a brother*** (**Proverbs 18:24**). We are always reminded that Jesus loves us. How do we know? *He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself...* (**I John 5:10**), *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.*

In my life as a Christian I received encouragement and strength by many other dedicated Christians. But to make my testimony complete I have to mention that during my walk with God I received continual edification through the correspondence with Sister Estelene Sloan of Mount Tabor Old Fashioned Missionary Baptist Church. She encouraged me to come to America and get baptized. I am greatly thankful to the Lord that we met each other in person for the first time at McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church on March 29, 1998 on the day of my baptism.

Angela Hutchison
Fall of 1991
Holy Rosary Catholic Church
Age 29

I desperately sought to understand why God continued to take those I love and felt I needed away from me, I walked a lonely path. I did not understand why so many things were happening to me or why my life continued to be one heartache after another.

Over the next year I questioned my faith and was burdened with many heartaches. I went from church to church feeling like I was lost everywhere I went. I found a safe place within the Catholic church where I felt God's presence. I pleaded with God to lead me closer to Him, to show me the direction I needed to go.

In the early fall of 1991, as I kneeled to pray, God lifted those heavy burdens. It was then that I felt peace and understanding of what God wanted of me. Now, I walk with God today and every day. I am so thankful for His many blessings.

Scott Russell

November 8, 1987

Victory Missionary Baptist Church

Age 7 (one day before turning 8)

I was sitting in a pew with Opal Carter at Victory Missionary Baptist Church. Two weeks before this Sunday, Grandpa had sat down with me and told me what it takes to be saved and how I didn't need to pray until I felt a burden. On November 8, 1988 God spoke to me and told me that I was lost while I was sitting with Ms. Carter. Grandpa was preaching that day and I knew that if I was lost I would go to hell. It didn't take but half of a verse of a song for me to hit that altar. At about 12:55 PM was when I got saved. He lifted that burden and I have never been the same since.

Rachel Watson

July 27, 1998

McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church

Age 10

I was saved during the revival on Monday, July 27, 1998. When I got saved, I was confused at first because I kind of still felt like I was lost so I wasn't sure if I was saved or not. But after church, I had the greatest feeling, so I knew I was saved. But every time the devil tries to make my heart feel bad, I just go into my room and say out loud, devil get behind me and God get in front of me and make the devil get behind and tell me if I'm saved or not and every time I feel saved.

Sam Tabor
August 1, 1997
McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church
Age 36

I got saved during the revival on August 1, 1997. My wife and I had attended the Monday night service and I felt I was under conviction at that service. So we went back again on Friday night when Bro. Johnny Carver preached on making preparations—"Are you prepared to meet the Lord?" He gave an altar call and I asked my wife if she would go with me? She said yes. I went and knelt down at the altar and prayed. Then all at once my burdens were gone. And that's when I knew I was saved.

Cheryl Tabor Alexander
January 11, 1981
Hendersonville Missionary Baptist Church
Age 17

I got saved on Sunday, January 11, 1987 at Hendersonville Missionary Baptist Church. I was sitting in the choir that morning and we had a guest to sing. Mr. Herman Hopper sang "Take my Hand Precious Lord." I was under such conviction I didn't know what to do first. Sister Louise Gregory asked me if I was lost and I said yes and went to the altar. Thinking that I would never get saved, then all of a sudden my burdens were all gone and I had such sweet Peace....

Ellen Dillehay
August 1932
Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Pleasant Shade, TN
Age 13

I was saved at the age of 13 in Cumberland Presbyterian Church at Pleasant Shade, TN in Smith County. I was attending the revival meeting and staying with my sister and brother-in-law, Patty and Oval Sloan. I knew I was lost and had known it for some time. I wanted to be saved but told myself I was not going to the altar. I was going to do it my way. On Monday during the day service I began to have an awful burden but still wanted to do it my way. Each day and night this burden would get worse and worse. I would pray and ask God to save me at home or anywhere except the altar. I let pride stand in my way until Saturday night when I had to do something about it. This burden was so great I could hardly wait until the preacher closed so I could go to the altar. I asked God to save my soul no matter where I was. I remember leaving my seat, but after that I don't really know what happened except that awful burden was gone and I was shouting the praises of God. I thank Him for saving my soul there in the aisle of that old country church 66 years ago in August 1932. Yes, He saved my soul. His way not mine. I feel sure someday I will see Him and thank Him again and again for saving my soul.

Glen Dillehay

1931

Edgefield Baptist Church, Nashville, TN

Age 14

I was saved at Edgefield Baptist Church in Nashville at age 14. Sixty-seven years ago that church practiced the old time way. The revival was going on and I was deeply burdened. I was asking God one night to lift my burden and He did and peace and joy came into my heart. I didn't join a church until I was 20 years of age. At that time I joined Cornwell's Chapel Missionary Baptist Church in Smith County. Yes, He saved my soul. I thank the Lord for it and I am still saved.

Steve Lambert
February 24, 1991
Hendersonville Missionary Baptist Church
Age 24

I was raised as a First Baptist and was under the impression that I was okay with my eternal life. Then Cher'e came into my life and took me to hear the true gospel. It didn't take but a couple of times before a great burden filled my heart. As bad as it was, I still tried to convince Cher'e that I was fine. After 3 or 4 months of "big time" confusion, on a Sunday morning February 24th, Chere's grandmother tugged my arm and asked if I wanted to pray. That was all it took. The next thing I knew, I was on my knees begging God to save me. Fifteen minutes later the burden was gone and I was full of Joy. The first thing I remember afterwards was a sweet lady saying, Joy unspeakable and full of Glory. How true it is. I thank God for my salvation.

Cher'e Towe Lambert

December 10, 1978

Hendersonville Missionary Baptist Church

Age 14

I grew up hearing the true gospel preached ever since I was a little girl, especially by my papa, Elder Robert Gregory. God seemed to always use His power and Spirit through his preaching, because you could see it, hear it, and feel it in his messages. I can remember him preaching many times about the rich man and hell. He would preach hell hot and the concern heavy to anyone to the point of thinking about your souls condition. I knew he wanted to see me saved and he would show me a picture from his Bible of the rich man lifting his eyes up in hell. That picture has always stuck with me and now I appreciate his efforts. It seemed there were many people worried and burdened for me. Many times I heard my name lifted up to Jesus in testimony plus there were many people praying for me. For some reason I never really thought I was lost for a while. I know I was very worried about my soul's condition and didn't want to die and go to that awful place called hell. I was always afraid and scared that I would say I'm lost when I really wasn't. I am so thankful for the people that kept reminding me about my soul's condition. My mother would talk to me and all I would say is I don't know and that is how I felt at that time. I also had a very special older friend named, Diana Glover DeRossett, that took a lot of time trying to help me understand where I stood with the Lord. Even though I was younger, she was my true friend and would let me spend the night with her and would read to me stories about Jesus and being saved. There was one story I will never forget and I believe the name of it was "Her last drink from the old well." In this story, the girl denied the knocking of Jesus and told Him to make the Spirit leave her because she was never going to the altar. This story scared me so much into thinking I'd better find out why I didn't know and was so confused because I did not want to end up like her. As time went by, that story would go over and over in my head. I finally realized and admitted to myself I must be lost and needed to do something about it. So I tried bargaining with God and telling Him I would pray for my soul's salvation as long as I didn't have to go to the altar. I guess it was fear, pride, and of course the devil holding me back. I would pray only in bed and seek the Lord in the seat where I was sitting at church time and time again, but it just didn't seem to be enough. As time went by two close ones died that I loved dearly. My Aunt Onie, who always wanted to see me saved before she left this world and my dog, Frisky. After losing

them it made me realize nothing can come before or between me and the Lord in order for Him to save me. So one Sunday on December 10, 1978 after papa preached, I finally made my way toward the altar. I fell on my hands and knees and didn't even make it all the way to the altar. I began to pour my heart out to God and cried and prayed for a while. Finally my last words were, God if you don't save me now I will never get saved and I'm not going to get up until you save me. Right after that, I didn't feel a need to pray anymore, the burden and heaviness was lifted and gone. I left it all at the cross and feet of Jesus. I joined the church and my papa got to baptize me. I expected a lot more to salvation like seeing lights, shouting, and being overwhelmed with peace and joy unconditional all the time. And, of course, the devil was trying to tell me that maybe you really didn't get saved. But, I came to know and realize that in my heart God saves only the soul from misery and not our flesh. God saves the inward man from sin and not the outward man from sins of this world. The sin of unbelief is the only sin that will cause a person to die without God and go to hell. I know it is up to me to enjoy my salvation and I am so thankful God was patient with me because I was 14 years old.

Matthew Kos

October 1957

At Home

I was saved in October of 1957. I had been out of work for a spell but started a new job on Monday. At the kitchen table at suppertime, a conversation began about McFerrin. This was following the fall revival. My wife made a statement that Truman thanked God for Jana. The song says, "I Saw the Light." Right then I saw that light—brighter than the noonday sun.

Mary Lucy
4th Sunday Night in May 1960

I had joined Mace's Hill Church in July 1946 but I was not saved at that time. In 1958 I started attending Salem Missionary Baptist Church just outside of Gallatin. I was saved on the 4th Sunday night in May 1960 but didn't tell anyone until October 1960 when my daughter got saved. We were baptized together on November 22, 1960 in Old Hickory Lake. There were 17 people baptized at that time—4 sets of mothers and daughters and one father and son.

Mildred Krengel
June
Rough Hill in Kentucky
Age 11

It was truly a blessing when I received Christ in my heart. We are truly blessed to have Bro. Johnny as our minister.

Jennifer Shepard
Easter Sunday
McFerrin at the Altar
Age 11

Well, I had been feeling lost for about 2 months when my grandmother was taking me to the revival at McFerrin Church. My mom and grandmother would always ask if I was lost and I always resisted the truth. It was the last night of the revival at church and Bro. Massey was preaching. They sang a song and then I knew the Lord was dealing with me. So Jan McCain said "Are you lost?" I said, "Yes." She went and got my grandmother. So I walked up to the altar and prayed my heart out and finally He saved me. That was the greatest thing or feeling that I had ever had.

Penny Weems

At Home

Age 9

The Lord saved my soul one Wednesday afternoon at home. Mother and I had been talking about church and being saved. I can remember not sleeping at night, rolling back and forth in my bed. I knew I was lost. That Wednesday, Mother and I were washing dishes and singing church songs when I went into the living room and knelt down in the floor and prayed. God saved my soul that day.

Dorothy (Dot) Woodall

July 1951

I had realized for quite some time that I was lost. On one particular night in July 1951, the burden was very heavy. I went to the altar and prayed for God to save me. The service closed around 9:00 PM. I just could not leave at this particular time. It was around 10:00 PM when God saved me. The sweet peace came into my soul. He touched me and made me whole. I thank God for saving my soul and joy awaits for me at the end of my journey.

Fetta Renfro

Age 15

I was saved when I was 15 years old. I doubted my salvation for several years. I always felt that something was not right. Each time there was an altar call, I felt I needed to do something. I finally realized that what I needed to do was to join the church and be baptized. Sallie and Shelby Brown were responsible for me finding McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church, the same kind of church I was familiar with in my childhood in the hills of Eastern Kentucky. Brother Gregory baptized me in a creek in Goodlettsville.

Frank Renfro
McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church

I attended McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church for several years before I was saved, joined the church, and was baptized. I was saved during a revival that Brother Curtis helped with. Jesse Powell saw that I was troubled one night. He and Bob McCain talked and prayed with me. I had known Jesse from childhood. He is no longer with us but I appreciate him so much. I was baptized in Old Hickory Lake near the back yards of Sallie and Shelby Brown and Mildred and Wilson Dillard.

Lisa Renfro Pyles
Fall Revival
Old McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church

I was saved during the fall revival at the Old McFerrin when I was a teenager. It seemed like I had made a million trips to the altar and I began to wonder if I would ever be saved. Then one evening I felt a peace and it was as if someone just said, "Everything is okay now." My salvation was not a jump up and shout experience—more of a calm awareness that everything was fine. I did not tell anyone for awhile because I worried that since my salvation was not a shouting experience that I might not be saved. Every time that I would pray about my salvation the calm feeling was there and I knew everything was all right with my heart. I joined McFerrin Church and was the first person baptized in the baptistry there.

Jacqueline Trice

March 1972

At Home

I was saved on a Monday night in March of 1972. I had gone to church the previous morning with my parents. After I went to bed that Monday night, I decided I needed to talk with my Mom and Dad. When I talked to them, my Dad asked me "what was wrong?" (Because I was crying) and I told him that "my stomach hurt." Dad then asked me when it first started hurting and I told him "yesterday morning." (Obviously, at church.) He then asked me if I wanted them to pray with me. I nodded "yes." (Both of my parents thought I had been under conviction for several days but patiently waited on God to let me know that I needed to be saved.) After we prayed together, I remember Dad asked me "If you died right now, where do you think you would go?" I told him "Heaven." The burden was gone and I felt such wonderful peace. I can still remember how peacefully I slept that night and the nights after...such an undeniable contrast to the previous week. Since that time, I have made many mistakes, felt true sorrow for sinful behavior and I have had to ask God to forgive me for those actions. But I have never again felt the unbearable pains of conviction that I felt that evening.

Annie Laura Smith
October 1935
Ebenezer Baptist Church
Age 23

I was saved at the age of twenty-three. I attended a revival at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Macon County, Tennessee in October 1935. Brother Willie Taylor preached a powerful sermon on the Prodigal Son, and I got under conviction, went to the altar and was saved. This was the first time I had ever been in a meeting like this. I am so thankful that I married a man who had been saved and led me the right way. I did not realize that I was lost until after I was twenty years old. After I was saved, I was unsettled as to what church I should attend and join as some of my friends tried to lead me another way. But I listened to the Lord, and He led me to join a Baptist church; and I have never been sorry. I believe with all my heart that I am in the right way. Brother Taylor baptized me into the fellowship of Ebenezer Baptist Church.

Kareen Pappas
Fall 1943
North Edgefield Baptist Church
Age 9

Bro. Fred Young was the pastor. One Sunday night in the fall of 1943, the Lord saved me. As a child of 9 years old, I started to ask all my friends to attend Sunday School and church. I have tried to be a witness for my Lord every since and will continue until the Lord comes for me.

Louis G. Pappas

April 1957

North Edgefield Baptist Church, Nashville

Age 23

The Holy Spirit convicted me of my sins in a Sunday night service but I did not answer His calling until the following Wednesday night prayer meeting. I was baptized as a boy of about 8 years of age but was not saved at that time. When I was saved and baptized at age 23, my life was changed forever when the Holy Spirit came into my heart.

Jack Whitley
McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church (Basement)
Age 11

I was saved when I was 11 years old in the basement of McFerrin Baptist Church during a revival held by Pastor F. L. Ray and helper, Elder Henry Smith. I had been going to the altar for several months prior to finding the Lord that night. The night I was saved I was very sick and didn't feel like getting up and going to the altar, but I went and sought the Lord. I remember thinking before I was saved that I had done all I could to find salvation. I also remember telling the Lord that I had exhausted all efforts to find Him and I give up. That is when He came into my heart and revealed to me I had been saved. I looked up to my Mother and told her I was saved. I had no more desire to go to the altar and seek Him. He took care of all my spiritual needs when He granted me salvation. That was 47 years ago and I rely on it to get me home when life here is over.

Jan McCain
July 1969
Old McFerrin Avenue Baptist Church
Age 6

We were having our Summer Revival and this was the 2nd Sunday of the revival. I don't remember who was helping Bro. A. G. Gregory, but I do remember that he was giving a hellfire and brimstone sermon and that he had used the story of Lazarus and the Rich Man. We haven't had a revival since then that has had as many lost people coming up to the altar to seek salvation. I had an uncle that died during that week and I remember standing at the grave and looking down at the casket as it was being lowered and the grave was being refilled. Mom kept pulling me back from the edge. Afterward, I was bothered. I had trouble sleeping and I felt like "something" was out there waiting for me. When we came to church that Sunday morning Bro. Gregory preached his sermon and everything he said made sense to me. I remember him giving the invitation and feeling sorry for all the people who were going up. I remember being hit like a ton of bricks with the realization that I shouldn't feel sorry for them because I was just like them. I was lost too. I wanted to hide, but I was frozen. Evidently Mildred Dillard noticed something and somehow went and got my Mother. I am not clear on those events because I was focusing on my feelings and trying to deny to myself that I was lost, but I was unsuccessful. Mom came up and eventually got me to go to the altar. By the time I went up, the mourners' bench, the front bench on the A-women's corner and one of the other front benches were filled. I knelt down next to the mourners' bench and began seeking God. I don't know how long I was down there but I do remember Mom telling me that Randy Wilkerson had just gotten saved. I knew that if he could do it I could do it and I was determined to stay where I was until I got saved. I had already told God that He could have my life, if that was what it took, but I was holding on to my family. When I finally turned the control of their lives over to God, I got saved. I felt a peace come over me. When I came out of the church, everything seemed so much brighter and I felt like I could tackle the world. I joined the church that night. At the October Revival in 1970, I was troubled. I couldn't put my finger on why I was troubled, so I didn't say anything to anybody. One night before services started two of the brothers in our church were talking about something and one of them suddenly turned to me and asked, "Have you ever doubted that you were saved?" Before I even thought, I answered

“No.” It was then, after I had blurted out my answer, that I realized that what was bothering me was not whether I had been saved, but why I was saved. I wasn’t any different than anybody else, so why did I get saved while others hadn’t? As I grew older I began to understand the “why” question I was asking myself, I’ve never questioned my salvation. There’s a thin line; especially for a young child, between the question of “Why was I saved” and letting it grow to the point that someone could doubt their salvation.

John Covington
April 1950
McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church

I came home from Detroit in April 1950. Everyone was going to McFerrin at the time so I went with my sisters and girlfriend, at that time. I went to the altar but didn't surrender but I was under conviction and wrestled with it all the next week. I went back the next Sunday night and while Bro. Henry Smith was preaching I was saved. I joined the church then and was baptized in Mansker Creek the next Sunday.

Donna Graves
1950
Eulia Baptist Church
Age 13

I had been to an altar of prayer several times during a revival but was not deeply convicted. Then one night as I prayed there, Bro. Claudie Miller told me to “surrender it all to Him.” I realized the seriousness of my condition. I began to pray earnestly because I was troubled and really wanted to be saved more than anything. The congregation was singing “I Would Not Be Denied.” I was not aware of who was around the altar at that time; it was just between the Lord and me. I did surrender it all to the Lord and found wonderful peace!

Eld. Tom Armstrong
August 30, 1956
River Road Missionary Baptist Church
Age 23

I attended a Southern Baptist Church as a child and I was almost deceived at Vacation Bible School. The speaker asked if we believed in God with all our heart and two of us went forward. We were so young we had not yet reached the age of conviction. My mother heard of my actions and that they were getting ready to baptize me. She knew that I was not under conviction and had not been saved, so she would not allow me to be baptized. How glad I am now that I later experienced conviction and godly sorrow in my soul. In 1945, we moved to a hillside farm in west Davidson County, TN. A Missionary Baptist Church had recently been organized in this community. It was known as River Road Missionary Baptist Church. My Mother and Dad joined this church and took my brother and me regularly during the time we were growing up. As time passed I realized from the preaching and teaching and by the Holy Spirit that I was apart from God. Being confused and rebellious, I promised myself when I was grown that I would not attend church. As the years passed, I dated and married a beautiful young lady, Retta Lou Lewis, who had been saved as a young girl. I seldom went to church with her but I remember going the Sunday she was baptized and a few other times to please her and my parents and her parents. My conviction set in and became worse each week, to the point I dreamed several times of the world coming to an end and me running to hide from the face of God. Retta would get our two children ready for church on Sunday and asked if I didn't think I should go. I lied and said, "No." In August 1956, a good friend who worked where I did was killed. At his funeral my heart became so heavy I started crying and couldn't stop. The more I cried, the better I felt. The last week of August 1956, the revival was going on at River Road Baptist Church; however, I was having to work the 3:00 PM to 11:00 PM shift that week and wouldn't have to go. As it happened, a friend at work asked me to change shifts with him on Thursday and work his day shift, and this allowed me to be off in the evening so I went to the service that night. I had tried many times to bargain with God, telling Him if He would save me at the barn, in the fields, in the woods or some other place besides going to the altar, I would go to church the next Sunday and tell them about having been saved. I didn't want to go to the altar, fearing what someone might think or say. In the

back of my mind, I thought if I ever went to the altar and was saved I would shout all over the house after seeing the light and hearing beautiful singing, maybe even tear up something while I was shouting. I have never done either of these things. On the evening of August 30, 1956 at age 23, I went to the revival knowing what I needed to do. When the altar call was given, I went and fell on my knees asking God to save me. My wife and parents and the other church people gathered around praying for me. After a while, when it seemed I couldn't go any further, I trusted God and He saved me by His grace. God came into my heart and gave me peace and joy, and that is all He promised to me. On Saturday night, I presented myself for baptism and to become a member of River Road Missionary Baptist Church and was baptized two weeks later. After a few months I became unhappy at some of the things the church was doing and moved my membership to Faith Missionary Baptist Church in Woodbine, where I was ordained as a deacon. About two years later I felt my calling to preach the gospel and was ordained by Faith Missionary Baptist Church along with three other ministers.

William James (Jay) Donoho III
McFerrin Baptist Church (Old Building)
Age 11

I was at the old McFerrin Church during a revival when the Lord Jesus Christ saved my soul. I was 11 years old and I can remember the pale green pews and that pale green altar like it was yesterday. Brother Jimmy Roberts was preaching that night. I remember sitting next to my mother and then something Brother Roberts said convicted my soul. The burden grew heavy and the next thing I knew I was crying like a babe. I remember it was not long before my sweet, sweet mother gave me an altar call, and it was to the altar I went. There must have been some serious praying going on that night because I looked up from the altar to catch my breath and there was Mrs. Taylor, the pastor's wife, man was she praying. I was not going to get saved tomorrow or in a little while, no sir I was going to get saved right then and there. I did not want to feel that burden any longer. I prayed for forgiveness of my sin and begged for salvation. That night the most inspirational love took place in my life, Jesus took control and saved my soul. Praise God. I rose up from the altar a newborn in the Kingdom of Heaven. I remember rejoicing with my new brothers and sisters. How sweet it is to have the gift of everlasting life.

Sherri Green
Gateway Baptist Church
Age 14

I had been raised in a Missionary Baptist Church and definitely knew when I became accountable for my sins. I was in a service at Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church in Lafayette, TN when I saw two young women get happy and start to shout. They happened to be sisters, and they were sitting at opposite corners of the building. They ran to meet each other in the center of the building and were jumping, hugging, and praising God together. This moved me immensely and I wanted to cry. What filled my heart with pain was the realization that I didn't have the joy of knowing Jesus the way they did and I was scared for the first time. After that, sermons that I had previously played through or even slept through began to disturb me. Thoughts of Jesus coming back were extremely upsetting because I knew I would be left behind crying for the rocks and mountains to fall on me and hide me from His face. I was 11 years old at this time.

My parents were divorced and my father attended a Southern Baptist Church. When I went with him, I saw the contrast of seeking the Lord at an altar versus walking down the aisle and simply stating that I believed Jesus was the Son of God. This seemed like a much easier way of getting saved. Especially since going to the altar was a huge stumbling block for me. I certainly didn't want to cry or pray in front of people. Why? Wouldn't they think that was funny and laugh at me? So I joined my father's church on a statement that I believed Jesus was the Son of God and was baptized. I convinced myself that I was saved and pretended for 3 years that everything was OK. To my mother's credit she never did question me or try to tell me that I shouldn't have joined my father's church. She continued to take me to church as always and let the Holy Spirit deal with me. I couldn't fool God and deep down I knew I was not saved; but I was embarrassed since I had supposedly gotten saved earlier when I was 12. One night during the revival, the Holy Spirit convicted me so deeply that I knew I had to do something. It seemed as if I was stuck to the seat and I couldn't get up. So I bowed my head and prayed to the Lord that He would send the pastor to speak to me. I no sooner had the prayer out of my heart, because I prayed silently, than the pastor came and spoke to me. He said, "Sherri, are you lost?" And I said, "yes." That was all it took to break away from my seat and I went to the altar where several others were already praying. My brother was one of the many there and this was even more

convicting since he had done the same thing I had done. I sought the Lord for a long time, it seemed to be hours. Others around me got saved but I stayed. People tried to instruct me and they prayed for me. I really didn't know how to pray or what to expect. Would I hear a voice or see some shining light? How would I know when the Lord saved me? Everyone said that you will know. Finally, I prayed very simply and although I can't recall exactly what I said, the meaning was along this line: "Lord, I have nothing to offer You and all that I have I give up. My mother, father, brother, dog, and my things I give up. I know I am lost and only You can save me. Please save me, please, please, please and then my pain left and I felt at ease. I was surprised and a little doubtful if this was salvation since I felt it was very quiet and easy so I tried to keep praying for Him to save me; but I did not have a burden to pray anymore. I rose up and a little woman, who is deceased now, asked me if I was saved. I said, "Yes, I am." I joined Gateway Church that night and was baptized in Percy Priest Lake at a later time. I was 14 years old.

It has been 22 years since that day. The peace I have is still there. "My peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (John 14:27) I know if the Lord comes back while I'm living, I am going to rise to meet Him in the air and live with Him forevermore. He has been the dearest friend I've ever had or will have and I thank God for His patience and loving kindness toward me.

Jim Green
Mt. Calvary Missionary Baptist Church
June 1991

I came from a family that did not go to church. I married Sherri when I was 19 years old. I went to church with her most of the time and she would talk to me about being saved. I remember one time when I got under conviction at Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church when Sherri's Aunt Mary came and spoke to me. I came close to going up to the altar at that time and I could picture myself up there, but then I came to myself and refused to go. It was many years later, in June of 1991, that I attended Mt. Calvary Missionary Baptist Church for the first time. I was at the lowest point in my life at that time. Elder Stephen Brooks was the pastor at that time and he preached on "hell". During the service, I was under deep conviction and even took Sherri's hand and placed it over my heart. It was beating so hard. I knew I was going to hell and needed to be saved. The invitation was given and I didn't go up. Sherri requested for another song to be sung, "Why Not Tonight". After the song, it was time to dismiss and Bro. Brooks asked if anyone had anything on their heart. It was at this time that I stood up and said, "I've been bothered for years and I've been bothered ever since I came in this church. I'm lost!" Bro. Brooks stood in the aisle and asked if I wanted to come to the altar and pray. I ran up there in a couple of steps. I bowed down and started to pray. This was the first prayer that I felt I had a direct connection to Jesus and I was not aware of anyone else around. Suddenly the pain in my heart left and I felt a calmness. I was amazed and startled at the way I felt when I got up. When I looked around I was overwhelmed by a sense of love for everyone there. Bro. Brooks asked me how I felt and I told him that I had been saved. He asked me if I were to leave the church and got killed going home, did I know where I would spend eternity? I told him that I would be in Heaven. Some of the people there that I saw first and that stand out in my mind were Bro. Rader, Bro. Colin Dyer, and Sister Linnie Blackaby. I went out of the church that day a new man and I'll never forget the ride home that day. It was several months later on my way home from work that I was impressed to join the church. I joined the following Sunday by experience and baptism.

William H. Woodall

1946

Age 15

I was saved in 1946 when I was 15 years old. I was taken to a Baptist church from my birth. I came under conviction around the age of 10. During our revival in August 1946, the convicting power of God became more than I could stand. That night on my bed I made peace with God and He lifted that heavy burden of sin. I have had peace in my soul since that time. I joined Hendersonville Missionary Baptist Church in 1971 and was baptized by Eld. Robert Gregory. I was a charter member of Harvest Missionary Baptist Church and was ordained to the office of Deacon by Harvest Church.

Ruby Jo Wilburn Woodall
Mace's Hill Baptist Church

When I was between 11 and 12 I began to feel alone, sad, and generally rejected. I felt like my mother didn't love me or anyone else. I often looked at the clouds late in the evening and wondered if the Lord was coming back that night. I came to understand this feeling was because I was lost. I was taken to church all my life but until the Lord revealed I was lost, I did not understand this feeling. I went to the altar on two occasions. During the revival at Mace's Hill, always held in July, I went to stay with my Aunt Sarah Shoulders. Her daughter and I went to get the cows and they were way between the hills, the shadows had come over, and it was quite dark. It seems the Lord was just following me every step I made. His question to me was why I did not trust Him. I started to cry and from that time until I came up off the altar that night at the service I cannot tell about. I had peace in my heart and the first feeling I recall was a feeling of freeness. I united with the church on Sunday and was baptized by Bro. Calvin Gregory.

Shelia Woodall
July 1972
My Grandmother's House
Age 9

The Lord saved me when I was 9 years old, on Wednesday, during the first week of revival at Pleasant Hill Missionary Baptist Church. It was the 3rd week of July 1972, and Elder F. W. Lambert was our pastor. I had gone to the altar on Tuesday night after being approached by Sister Beverlee Bowman. I knew before she ever turned around to talk to me that I was lost. I was actually negotiating with the Lord that if He'd just have Beverlee talk to me, I'd be able to make a move and go up to the altar. She came to me and I went up...but I didn't get saved that night. I got saved the next day at my Grandmother's house. I was expecting more. I was looking for a special sign. I talked to my brother, who had gotten saved the year before, and asked him how you were supposed to feel. He told me that you just felt happy and not bad anymore. Well, I felt happy. But that still just didn't seem like enough to me. So I decided that I'd wait until church that night, and if I didn't feel lost like the night before, then I'd know I had been saved. We went to church that night, I didn't feel any burden during the sermon, and I didn't feel any burden when the altar call was made. There was no fear, no need to pray, and no need to cry. Sister Goldie Harrison came back to talk to me and ask me if I was lost, and I told her I thought I might be saved. She told me if I was saved, I'd know it. Then my best friend and her twin sisters came to talk to me. I told them about not feeling like I needed to pray, or not having that burden anymore. I told them I thought I was saved, and I was going to wait until we got home before I told mamma and daddy. They quickly told me that would be wrong; what if we had a car wreck on the way home and I got killed – they'd think I had died lost and gone to hell. IMMEDIATELY a panic came over me, and I knew I couldn't let them think that! I wasn't going to hell if I died, I was going to Heaven! I KNEW at that moment that I had truly been saved. I ran up to the Amen corner, tugged on my dad's shirt and told him I had gotten saved that day. I joined the church during that revival and was baptized the first Sunday in August.

Brian Johnson
At Home in Bed
Friday, April 25, 2003, 6:00 AM

I have been lying in my bed thinking about what to say and praying that God will direct me tonight or sometime this weekend. My heart has been so burdened the past two weeks to tell this my testimony of the longsuffering and great love of my Savior Jesus Christ. My heart is trembling even now as I try to write this.

Imagine the woman that had the issue of blood for 12 years. The issue of blood is symbolic of her sin. Well, add one year to the twelve and you have me.

Since I was 9 years old, I have lived a life pretending to know Jesus. I have always been raised in church and attended I don't know how many revivals. Back to the night of January 20, 1990 during the singing, I was squirming around in my seat. Of course, I could not stay still. My mom should have already known that I had more physical energy than the energizer bunny. I still do on occasion.

That night at a singing at Humbles Chapel Church, my mom for the first time asked me if I was lost. I really dismissed her and continued to sleep or climb under the pews. I was a restless child anyway but my mom had every good intention in pointing me to Jesus.

The gospel was being proclaimed through song, even though I do not remember anything they sang. At the end of the service, all the men and women of the church went to the front and began to pray. It sounded like a host of angels uttering tongues that I could not understand.

For some reason, I began crying in my seat. I don't know if it was because they were all crying out to God or what, but I somehow went to the altar and tried to be like them. I cried but really don't remember saying a word. I stayed there for probably 45 minutes or an hour. I am not sure what I was doing unless it was all to show the power, longsuffering, and glory of God. I finally came up from the altar. I had received nothing. I really do not remember asking for anything.

As I turned around, it seemed that there was a multitude of people gathered around me. Note I am a 9-year-old kid surrounded by 20 adults. I can remember my Dad being in the back of the circle, so they led me to him. He asked me if I had been saved. For some reason, I distinctly remembered hesitating and saying, "Yes."

Everyone began rejoicing and hugging me. I felt better from crying and especially from all of the hugs. I got more than my 8 physical touches to promote good emotional well-being. I felt fantastic.

As the years continued, I continued to go to church. I had joined New Liberty Missionary Baptist church the next day and told them that I felt fantastic. I was 9 and sincere, however I did not know the power of His resurrection in my heart. I began to know Him through my mind, studying in Sunday School, and occasional reading of the Word.

I don't remember praying very much until revival times. I can remember just as if it was yesterday, the night my 12-year-old sister was saved. I was under the pew that she was praying on asking God to open my eyes. It didn't happen that night, yet I did get emotionally excited for my sister. Our family circle was now unbroken. At least everyone thought it was. I had convinced myself in my mind that everything was okay. I am sure Satan loved this.

On another occasion, I went to the altar when my cousins, who I had invited, began seeking the Lord. Again, I found myself in the end praying for my own salvation. Another night, one of my teammates was saved. I went up there with him, but I was seeking on my behalf. This happened on numerous occasions.

I was not afraid to go to the altar and pray—revival after revival. I was convicted and sought the Lord. After the revivals were over, I convinced myself with the devil's help that I was just fine.

What are the deep things of God anyway? I tried to live right and was a pretty good boy. I came from a strong line of believers. My granddad taught Sunday School and was a deacon and my Dad was the song leader and became a deacon during my high school years. My great grandfather and great great grandfathers were also deacons at my church. It was established in 1851 by my very own family members. It was a small country church, but the power of God met with us there through His Spirit. The heritage was strong, but in the end, it would get me nowhere.

Thankfully, God works on us on a personal basis. Only we know ourselves. Our parents and friends may think they know us, but God has always known us, before the foundation of this world. He knew that I would be giving this testimony today at this very moment.

As I graduated high school, the Lord allowed me to stay close to home. I attended Union University in Jackson, TN. It was only 45 minutes away from my house, so it allowed me to expand my horizons, yet I could still make a call and get a nourishing meal and fresh clothes. It was a blessing to be that close and still be able to attend New Liberty.

By this time, I had become self-righteous. I read the word of God, read the Christian books halfway through, and prayed more. I remember thinking that I would not make it through college because Jesus would be coming back before then, so I spent what little money that I had because saving was out of the picture. I had worked at a grocery store through high school making \$4.25 an hour, so I really didn't have much. Many days, I wandered through that store asking God to help me. I had to come on His terms, drop my self-righteousness, self-absorption, my pride, and fall at His feet. During my college years, God blessed me anyway. I tried to know Him fully, but again it was just in my mind and not a matter of my heart. It wasn't that I didn't try. I just let my pride talk me out of being lost. I continued to be in accountability groups. I never shared too deeply except for the common guy struggles that we all had. During my junior summer, I even went on a mission trip to China. I prayed about going and God provided the money. I went with good intentions and proclaimed Jesus and His word, but I was a Pharisee or hypocrite. The Lord dealt with me there. *"For I am persuaded, that neither, death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus."* (Romans 8:38, 39) His love beckoned me there. I thought I was okay. I was trying to spread His gospel to these hungry people. I know He worked in China because He worked on me. I thought I truly loved Him, but it was just a convincing of my mind. I came back to Tennessee and no one understood or would give me the time to tell them about China. I was frustrated in so many ways. The Lord even allowed me to make Union's Basketball team. I really wanted to make a difference for His cause. Hopefully, my teammates did see that I was trying to live for the Lord. They were a rough bunch of guys anyway. I finally graduated and took a job in Cool Springs. I did not know where I would live, but God provided a great Christian family in Columbia. God worked on me in that little room. He led that woman to me that I could see her great faith. I was so hungry for God's Word during that time. I felt like the Ethiopian Eunuch. God was still working on me. Where would I go to church now? Are there any spirit-filled Bible believing churches around here? My friend, Andrew, the pastor of a church back home told me of Bro. Mike Stokes, so I called and asked him where the closest church to Columbia was that I should attend. He told me of his (Longview), but his wife mentioned one off Old Hickory Blvd. Being new to Nashville, I thought this was great. It could not get any better—there was a church 6 miles from my office—only 43 miles from Columbia. Long story short, I became

educated on Old Hickory Blvd. and found McFerrin 60 miles down the road. I loved coming to church here. The people had a genuine love for you and the Lord. The Spirit of God was here because He was convicting my soul. I spent four restless nights at the Tennessee Baptist Children's' Home during revival. My friend worked there so I packed enough clothes for the week in order to attend and save myself on driving. God continued to deal with me on and off. I spent many miserable hours working in my office and driving home trying to cry out. I stayed up at night reading and trying to plead with God. On one night, lightning struck a tree outside my window at 2:00 AM. I know God was telling me to wake up. I was lost, lonely, and hopeless. I knew very few people and found hope in this church. I continued to wonder and wander, lonely, and miserable in my heart. I still enjoyed life, my family and friends, but my heart was dark.

I tried and tried to be helpful, encourage, and do whatever I thought the Lord would be pleased with. I even played with an awesome group of basketball players. They needed a point guard, so I fit right in. Now skipping ahead to the Men's Retreat, it was one of the sweetest things I have ever been involved in. I loved those men, their testimonies, and their sincerity to know God more. Everyone seemed to open up. Luckily, on Friday night, I was almost last. I debated over and over what to tell them about my salvation. I looked up to them and watched them as they cared for and loved their wives, children, and church. I told them of what was a time and place in my life. My eyes were beginning to open more and more as God began dealing with me.

I lay in my two bed room by myself. The storm came and lightning struck close once again throughout the night. It was so symbolic of my soul. Dark and scary. God was saying wake up. I learned so much that weekend. We must pray, read God's Word, attend church, and give of our tithes and time. I started off hot. I was 2 for 2 on Sunday, but church attendance would not do anything for me either. On Sunday afternoon, I was washing clothes, ironing, and cleaning up in my apartment. The Lord was saying, you need to go to church. I wanted to be fed or learn more about what I should do. My heart was so heavy that night. I dismissed in prayer and asked God to uproot the sin and walls in my callused heart. Please make it tender. I continued praying after the service. I began to desire to have a desire to be the best Bible reader and studier there was and to have the greatest desire of any man to be like Jesus. I went to bed or laid there and between 1:00 and 2:00 AM, I lay prostrate on the floor begging God to have mercy on a sinner like me. I was a Pharisee, very legalistic, and hypocritical. I had no hope. My life would be lived in vain. I

would never be led by His Spirit. I would never know true happiness and joy. I would be miserable. I would be alone, because I did not want to be involved in a relationship because it would not be focused on God. Maybe in my mind, but not in my heart. I desired God and promised Him my all. Whatever He wanted me to do. I was at the end of my rope in the pit of despair. I begged and begged and listed all my sins that I could think of to ask forgiveness of and the ones I could not think of. I lay there in silence, waiting and hoping that He would hear my prayer. I finally got back in my bed and lay there pleading. I became silent and saw myself getting up from an altar. A few moments later, I felt a cool gentle breeze sweep through my body. It was not audible or anything that I had expected. A cool gentle breeze was my assurance. I raised up in my bed and ask God, "Is this it." I distinctly felt like Paul. It felt that the shackles had fallen from my eyes (2:21 AM).

I jumped out of bed and began praising my God and Savior throughout my apartment. I wanted to test my eyes because I felt that I had supervision. My heart was quickened and made alive. I opened my Bible and it opened to Matthew, Chapter 10. At the top, it said conditions of discipleship. I read verse 39, *"He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."* The very verse that I struggled with last summer now has meaning to my life. I ended up getting four hours of sleep that night but woke energized, refreshed, knowing that I now am a child of God. The ladies at work thought I had smoked something on the way in. It was the Spirit of God flowing through my veins.

"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before. I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:13,14

Treva Dawson
April 1981
Pennsylvania Avenue Missionary Baptist Church
Age 16

I was saved in April of 1981. I was sixteen at the time and one night had a dream that the Lord came back and asked me point blank where I stood. I told Him I did not know. When I awoke from my dream, I realized that I was lost. The following Sunday morning at church (Pennsylvania Avenue Missionary Baptist Church), after the preacher gave the altar call, I just laid my head down on the pew in front of me and started praying. The rest of the congregation came and gathered around me and the preacher asked if I was lost. I told him I was and we all prayed together. I remember pouring my heart out to the Lord and in an instant I felt so much better. The others were singing a song and I remember sitting back in my seat and smiling. Once they had finished singing the song, I remember saying that I felt better. The preacher then proceeded to ask me some questions and the devil came on the scene and told me that I wasn't saved. You see, I am a very passionate person and the devil told me, "If Jesus really saved you then you would be shouting, turning cartwheels, loving on everybody, etc." I then began to doubt what the Lord did for me and continued to go to the altar for years. But when I would go to the altar, the burden of being lost was no longer there, but I would still try and pray. I would pray for something to show me whether I was saved or lost. In retrospect, I suppose I was hoping for something "carnal" to show where I stood with the Lord. I continued to live in doubt for 22 years until things started happening in my life. Things that made me wonder if God was trying to wake me up. I was impressed to go and talk to Brother Johnny Carver about my doubting situation. He told me he could not tell me if I had been saved or not, that was between God and me. But he did say one thing that struck me, if God did save me then I had to walk out on Faith and trust in Him that the peace that He gave me was all that I was going to get. Well, on the way home that night I prayed for God to truly show me where I stood – and He did! He showed me that He DID save me back there at Pennsylvania Church 22 years ago. The devil would love for me to beat myself up over the 22 years that I lost doubting what the Lord did for me. But I refuse to let the devil get me down and as we all know, we cannot change the past – only learn from it. I cannot tell you how much joy has come into my life since God cleared up this dilemma for me. I joined the church on September 14th, 2003 and

was baptized on September 28th. I thank God for what He did for me and know that He is by my side through it all. I have asked God to help me be a positive light to someone so that they can see not what I've done, but what Jesus has done for me.

Kristina McClanahan
July 25, 2006
McFerrin Baptist Church
Age 11

Brother Massy was preaching that night, when I was saved. I was baptized by Brother Carver on Sunday night.

Annette M. Page
10/15/80
Pilgram The Baptist Church
Age 23

I never attended church until I met my husband. I went to a revival at his church one night and the preacher was preaching and I went to the altar with some others that night and I thought I got saved. I didn't know a lot about church. For seven years I believed I was saved until one night my sister-in-law's husband went to the altar and I went to pray for him and I could not get my prayers across I went home not knowing why I was not able to pray. I kept praying and that is when God let me know that I was lost. I told my husband that Sunday that I was lost and I needed to be saved. It wasn't until the following Wednesday that I was saved on October 15, 1980 around 9:00 PM, when He took my burden away just two days before my natural birthday. I joined the church and was baptized the following Sunday.

Kathryn Holloway

1997

At home in my bed

Age 7

I was saved when I was 7. I hadn't been lost for that long, but one night I was lying in bed and couldn't sleep. I just remember being scared that I was going to die or Jesus was going to come back and I wasn't going to get to go to Heaven. So I just started praying after a few minutes, I still felt terrible and so I gave up. I told God that I just couldn't do it and as soon as I let go, my burden went away, and I knew I was saved. Then 2 years later I joined the church and a little after that I was baptized.

Melissa Graves

1984

In my bed at home

Age 15

My Journey begins as follows:

I began having a burden at age 7. I asked a lot of questions to my Grandmother Parker but she was of a different belief and didn't know or understand what I was feeling inside. She just didn't want me to join a Baptist church. It felt as though God was knocking on a door (my heart). I can remember walking outside praying and singing to God and the knocking would begin. This went on for a while and then it stopped and I wasn't sure why. I remember as a child Bro. Mack saying at the end of his sermons this question, **(Is God knocking on your heart, won't you let him come in?)** Then the song **Come Home**, I can remember it playing on the organ in our little church. I felt like God was knocking on my heart. One day that summer (age 7) my sister went to the front of the church and wanted to join the church. She was crying and talking to the preacher. I got very scared because I thought she was going to Heaven and I wasn't, so I went up to the preacher (Bro. Mack Pinkleton) a few seconds later and said that I wanted to join also. I was so scared and so afraid that I wouldn't go to Heaven I went up and joined without God dealing with me. God wasn't knocking on my heart and I had not felt Him in a long while. My sister and I were baptized in Weekly Creek. We did not have a baptistry in our church at the time. (New Hope Baptist Church, Pulaski, TN).

Years went on and I began to feel a faint knocking at my heart again. This time I wasn't even sure what was happening. I thought I was okay I had joined our church and had even been baptized a few years before.

I was 15 years old when I was praying in my bed one night I don't know how long or what I prayed all I know is that I began to cry, laugh and giggle all at once. I was so happy and filled with joy and peace. It felt like a fountain bubbling over and over. (A continual overflowing). **GOD had given me peace over my soul that night.** I didn't join the church again because I had already been baptized and had joined when I was 7 years old. I have never told anyone this complete story before.

During the 2006 Revival at McFerrin I got confirmation on when I was saved. I have been attending McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church for seven years it wasn't until I came to this church that I felt as though I was missing

something. Everyone had a testimony to tell about when they were saved. I was not raised hearing this even though I attended a Baptist Church all my life. The members at McFerrin would give their testimonies and talk about having a burden or tell about being under conviction. I had no idea what they were talking about. I had never heard anyone speak of this before. I felt like I was lost because they all had something that I didn't (a time and a place).

So as I have sat and listened for 7 years here at McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church, I have prayed that God would save my soul. But I realized in this revival, August 2006, I was praying the wrong prayer. God had already saved me at 15 years old. I didn't see light or angels, I just felt so happy and filled with joy (age 15) that I just bubbled over with happiness. That was all God was ever going to give me. In my doubt I have cheated myself out of so much joy. He will only save you once and that is all it takes. I have felt God's presence during Bible studies and while listening to others give their testimonies and have been so happy for them. That's why I know I am saved. Today, August 6, 2006, I was touched by God once again and led to join McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church. I know that this is where GOD wants me to be.

Raymond Smith
June 24, 1936
Ebenezer Baptist Church
Age 19

I joined Ebenezer Baptist Church in October of 1936. This is the only thing I cannot forget.

Barbara Parker
July 1947
West End Gallatin, TN
Age 13

I was staying with my Grandmother in Gallatin. We were going to the revival at West End Church. I was saved on a Wednesday night, Brother Ray had preached that night. I can't say just what happened but when the Lord's Spirit hit me I came up crying, shouting and hugging everyone. I was one happy little 13 year old girl. The Lord has blessed me every day.

Jean McClanahan
1948
Meridian St. Church of God
Age 13

I was saved in a revival at the Meridian Street Church of God when I was 13 years old. I had been under conviction for sometime before the revival started. I knew the night that I went to the altar that I could not leave there before I got saved. I was so afraid the Lord would come if I left there not saved. I left there that night walking home which was just down the street praising God for what He had done for me. I know that is real for I feel His presence with me all the time. He has been with me through a lot, my sickness and everything. I could never thank Him enough there are not enough words. I just pray that our grandchildren will one day will be saved and experience what I have.

I am so thankful for my mother who carried me to church all the time and brought me up the right way. I am also thankful to be a member of McFerrin Baptist Church and for our pastor.

Beverly Riggan Donoho
June Revival 1961
McFerrin Baptist Church
Age 15

I had been going to the altar for 4 or 5 years. My mother would send me in the summer when my grandmother's revival at Old Hopewell was in progress. In the June revival on a Sunday morning the altar was full and several people were saved and the spirit was great. I felt something that day but not what I expected. I know now that is the day I was saved but I told no one. I kept going to the altar and in the revival on a Sunday in August of 1962, I finally became satisfied. I was on the altar and finally said "Lord if you will just let Mrs. Ray or my mother sit beside me I will tell of my salvation". In that instance Mrs. Ray sat down and I told her. I was baptized on August 19, 1962. I have never doubted my salvation again. God fills my heart with a spirit that is undeniable. I may get weak sometimes but I know He is always there.

Patty Shoulders

July 27, 1999

Altar at McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church

Age 28

Like many people I had grown up going to church on a regular basis. When I was 12, I professed my acceptance of Jesus and joined my church at the time. I always felt the Lord was in my life. However, when I got married and started attending McFerrin, the questions started creeping into my mind. For several years, I let my head tell me I was okay. I even suggested to my husband that we try another church. Finally, I was very frustrated and prayed to the Lord to help me know if I was saved. I think I knew I was lost, but my stubbornness and pride would not allow me to do anything about it. The third night of revival, Joan Oldham, a woman I respect and love dearly, came up and asked me if I needed to go pray. I just decided that was exactly what I needed to do. It was so difficult to go up to the altar, but once I was there I forgot everything else. I prayed and literally remember saying "Jesus, I am giving it all to you; I don't know what else to do. Here is my heart, please forgive me." I was quiet for a few minutes, but I know the peace was there. He saved me and I know that "time and place" I had wondered about for years was really there. I have relived with wonder that moment many times. He cares for me and to know He wants to do that for every person is so amazing.

Retta Lewis Armstrong Hill

In my bed

Age 13

I have now been saved a long, long time. It is so surprising when I add it up and the time has gone so fast. In that length of time I have had three last names, and I am proud of all three of them. The Lord has truly blessed me all of these many years. I was saved when I was about thirteen years old on a Friday night. A friend of mine from school had come to spend the night and I was sharing my bed with her. During the night there was a terrible thunderstorm and I was so afraid. I had been to the altar at New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church during the revival. I knew I was lost, but I felt sure that all of those good Christian people's prayers would persuade the Lord to save me. I learned during that storm when everyone was asleep except for me, that if I was going to be saved I would have to ask the Lord myself. I was praying more diligently than ever before. Suddenly, I felt a great peace come over me. Somehow, I felt that this was a very personal thing and I did not tell anyone, not even my friend who was sleeping with me, that I had been saved. I feel sure she would not have known what I was talking about as she was of a different faith. I have wished many times that I could tell her about this wonderful Jesus who will save us from our sins if we will only ask in faith believing. My friend died about three years ago. How I wish I could know the truth about her soul. Elder A.J. Sloan was the pastor at New Bethel when I realized I was lost. I never saw Marie after we graduated but I still think of her now and then. I never told anyone about being saved until one evening I was riding with my mother who was driving even though she did not know how to drive and she ran the car down a very deep ditch. Mother was so distraught and thinking how easily we could have been killed, she decided to ask me if I had ever been saved. I told her of my experience of salvation.

On August 17, 1952, I was baptized into River Road Missionary Baptist Church by Elder Albert Crouch, who was the pastor at that time. At that time Tommy had not been saved and was not saved for another four years. I thought I had been praying for him a long time and was discussing it with my grandmother Lewis. I remarked to her that I didn't believe Tommy would ever be saved. She said "Well, Honey, don't give up". I know that Tommy will be saved and will also be called to preach. Being a pastor's wife was not in my plans! Obviously it was in God's Plan as we had many wonderful years in His service. I have now learned that you do not have to

be a preacher to serve the Lord with your whole being. Much to my surprise, the Lord gave me a fine Christian man when Tommy had to go to his long home. I never dreamed there would be someone else for me, someone of the same faith, a gentleman, a very dear mentor to my children and someone they could and would look up to and admire. James H. Hill is a very quiet man with a gentle soul. I thank my God for him. Jim also has a new name "Poppy". McFerrin Church has given me many precious memories—two of them being that my brother, Doyle and my sister, Patricia Ann, were saved at the Old McFerrin Church. One of them has changed denominations and the other does not attend church. At least I can remember both of them being on the altar and being saved the same day. Count my blessings??? It is not possible!!!

Ben McClanahan
Center Point School
Age 10

I was saved when I was ten years old. Brother Gilliam Porter and little John Gregory were holding a revival at Center Point School. I was under heavy conviction that night and I went to the altar and got saved the first night. I was baptized by Brother Calvin Gregory. I joined Goodwill Baptist Church and awhile later I became a member at McFerrin Baptist Church.

Troy Watson

Age 11

I was saved while I was praying. I may not be sure of the time and date or even the place for that matter, but I am sure of one thing, God saved my soul. Although I have had times of doubt, God has always assured me that the peace in my heart is real and that it is there to stay forever. No one can ever take that away from me. I love my God!

Debbie Woodall

It was on a Friday

I was saved on living room floor of a trailer that we lived in, Cato

Age 21

My goodness what a story...

When I was 11 years old, I thought that I had been saved. Looking back, I think the reason that I thought I was saved, was because, at our Goodwill Missionary Baptist Church revival in 1976, there were about 50 people who were saved. I guess looking back, I was so happy that my sister was saved, that I confused being happy for her and all of the others, with having been saved myself. Boy was I wrong!

As years passed, the Lord began to knock at my heart and was whispering to me that I needed more in life and there was something bigger than me and that I needed Him and mainly, warning me that if I didn't find Him, I would burn in hell for eternity. I can remember each day going to work in Lebanon at Bradley Candy. The entire drive there, I was afraid of dying. No, there was no peace, and thank God that He made this feeling so real, for I may have never looked for Him. I was so miserable. All of this time, I was still thinking that I had been saved. I kept trying to brush this feeling aside, then the pain and agony of waking up and then the fear of dying was so overwhelming. That one day, I prayed all of the way home from work, "Lord, if you will just let me live to get home, I will do whatever it takes to be saved." I remember, hardly changing from my work clothes and putting my purse down, that the feeling of dying without the Lord and burning in hell, became so intense. I remember feeling that same knock at my heart. I knew the presence of the Lord was there, and I was crying and begging. Looking back I remember I was all over the living room floor, just begging for mercy. Then I heard the loud, firm, but yet ever so gentle words of "Don't worry". I looked all around me, thinking someone was there speaking and the words were so loud and clear, that I began to tremble. Then I remember praising the Lord. That's when I did come down from my spiritual high. I was in the bathroom on the floor. Somewhere along, being on my knees, I had crawled down the hallway to the bathroom. This is where I stopped. On that night in the little trailer that Steve and I rented, was where I met my Father and Savior. The very next day, Mr. Towns came after the rent, he was a good Christian man. I remember telling him, "The Lord was here last night". He just looked at me, (ha-ha). What a blessing to have been asked to put my salvation experience down in

writing. Yes, I have a time and a place, and praise God for His love and mercy.

Lord have mercy. I knew then I was a child of God. There are times I get down, and there are times, that I doubt the Lord. I guess I wonder how a Lord as He could love someone as myself. I disappoint and let Him down so many times. Then the Lord takes me back to that Friday night, and I can relive that moment as if it had just happened.

Ocie Jewel Powell
1926
Red Boiling Springs
Age 18

My name is Ocie Jewel Powell and I remember my experience like it was yesterday. I was 18 years old and there was a church gathering on the river down in Smith County up at Red Boiling Springs. There were 21 of us to be baptized that day and I was very willing to commit my life to the Lord. Though I cannot remember the brother's name, I can remember going under the water and seeing a bright wonderful light and felt the excitement and love of the Lord.

I am 98 years old on November 13, 2006 and will never ever forget that day. I have seen all the Lord can provide and do in your life.

God Bless, Ocie J. Powell, 10/13/06

Cyndi Matthews
Summer of 1967
McFerrin Church on McFerrin Avenue
Age 9

It was during a night service at the revival. I found myself in that uncomfortable, nervous, I want to get out of here feeling!! I remember feeling really scared when I heard the altar call. I was sitting in the pew and Mom asked me if I was lost, then June Shoulders leaned down to me and said, "Cyndi don't be scared, He will save you if you just ask Him and believe in Him." My mom and sister were with me the whole time. I remember wishing my Daddy was there. He was out of town. I prayed so hard I thought I would burst. June Whittemore then talked with me and told me to trust Him. I remember her telling me it will be okay. Then the most wonderful thing happened.... I felt wonderful, happy, and unafraid. I looked at my Mom and she was smiling too. "I was saved." I could not wait to call my Daddy.

Katherine Kos

Down by the railroad crossing

I grew up in Smith County, Tennessee. We went to church at Mace's Hill and Mount Tabor. I went up to the altar many times. At home at night I would ask Mama and Papa to pray for me. Then they would get out of bed and sing and pray. One day a bad storm cloud came up. I knew if I died I would go to hell. I asked Mama and my oldest sister to pray for me. After a while, the storm passed and I wasn't afraid anymore, so I let the devil deceive me into thinking I was saved. I would always go back to that time in my mind, but I didn't feel anything.

I got married and moved to Pennsylvania. I got sick and we moved back to Tennessee. That was a great blessing. I joined the church and was baptized. But still there was no peace.

One day as I took my husband to work, the song "The Life Boat", was all I could get on my mind and heart. "If you stand and wait too long you shall forever die." I prayed, I don't remember coming home at all, but down by the railroad crossing I was condemned. I felt like I was chained and the door closed forever. At that moment I was set free and the greatest peace and joy I had ever known came. I pounded the steering wheel of the car and said "I'll never doubt again." And I heard a voice of something saying, "I know that Jesus saved me and that's enough for me." I waited years before I told the church all that had happened. I then joined and was baptized. This is a long testimony, but that is what happened. Thank the Lord.

Kristy Oldham
June 9, 1989
McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church
Age 18

I was saved at McFerrin on June 9, 1989. I had been coming to McFerrin since Easter of that year, when McFerrin moved into the new church building on Old Hickory Boulevard. Jeff and I had been coming to the revival the whole week just after our high school graduation. There were really not many people who attended the services that week, so other than very regular older members, I was possibly the only non-saved person there. Needless to say, I felt like every sermon was being preached entirely to me!

By Wednesday of that week, I knew I was lost. It took me, however, until Friday to do anything about it. I really felt a lot of conviction during the sermon and began praying in my seat. After the preaching was done, Joan Oldham came back to ask me if I wanted to go to the altar. I immediately got up and went to pray.

I was saved pretty quickly after going up. I can remember the faces of all the people there as I stood up. I am so thankful that I was able to have such a strong feeling of conviction. There is no doubt that I was truly lost; therefore, I have no doubt about my salvation.

I joined the church on Sunday morning and was baptized that evening.

Billy N. Gammons
October 1946
New Harmony Missionary Baptist
Age 10

I was saved October 1946. I joined New Harmony Missionary Baptist Church October 1947. Brother Calvin Gregory baptized me in November 1947. I was 10 years old. I was ordained a deacon at Longview Baptist Church, November 14, 1981.

Joan Scott
June 1967
McFerrin Baptist Church
Age 24

I knew the very moment I was lost. I became so afraid of dying and going to hell. I could not eat or sleep or enjoy doing anything. I paced the floors and would beg the Lord to please save me. This went on for about a week. The following week the revival started, I went to church on the second Sunday of the revival. My sister June came to me and asked me if I was lost, I said yes. I told her the Lord wouldn't save me because I felt like I was an awful sinful person. As soon as I said that, the Lord saved my soul. That day was a bright sunny day. But when I was saved it was an even brighter day. **And I know that I know, that I know, that I know I am saved.**

Tyler Malkiewicz
March 6, 2008
Saved at the altar McFerrin
Age 13

On Sunday night I came to the revival and I went to the altar because I had a bad feeling. I went home and I didn't go to school the next day. On Wednesday I came to the revival and I went to the altar and I was praying and I got saved.

Janice Crook
May 1959
At Home in the Kitchen
Age 14

One day I realized that I was lost and needed to be saved. I was so fearful of dying, because I knew that if I died at that moment I would go to hell. The conviction began to be so heavy. I prayed constantly, it seemed, but just could not get an answer. I would pray when I went to bed, but it seemed like my prayers would not go higher than the ceiling. I was afraid to go to sleep for fear that I would not wake up and end up in hell. This went on for about a week, the burden getting heavy every day. Finally on Saturday about the middle of the afternoon, I was standing at the kitchen sink and thinking, God I can't stand this heavy burden anymore, either you have to save me or I am going to die right now, please help me. At that moment, the burden lifted and it seemed it went right out of the window over the sink. I had such peace within. I knew at that moment everything was alright with me and God.

Gary Hall
August 1975
Bethlehem Missionary Baptist Church
Age 9

During Bethlehem's annual revival meeting I had realized my condition was that I was lost and needed salvation. On several occasions Sister Pam Tidwell had asked me, "if you were to die where would you go...?" I would always respond, "I'm okay, it's alright" until the night I got saved. Here she came, my heart was pounding. The moment sister Pam said "if" I was on the altar praying to God to save my soul. I don't know how long I pleaded. There was just a moment when I felt this peace, the burden was gone. I was saved! What a Glorious God to save a wretch like me.

Kaycee Curran
July 25, 2006
McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church
Age 12

I had been feeling lost for a few days and on the way to the revival one day my Grammy was talking to me about how I was acting lost. That night when Brother Massey was done preaching and had called the lost to the altar, Ms. Sabrina Carver came and asked me if I wanted to go down to the altar. I said, yes and after a couple of minutes the burden was lighter. I told my Grammy and said that I didn't know if I was saved. She asked me to pray some more. After about 5 more minutes, I felt like sunshine had come into my heart. I told my Grammy and hugged her. Everybody around me started crying because I knew I was going to join them in Heaven.

Kent Collier
June 15, 1970
Rayon City Missionary Baptist Church
Age 8

It was on a Tuesday night of the revival and Brother Horace Head was assisting our pastor Elder Odie Russell. Bro. Head was preaching hell so hot you could feel it. I also was sunburned from the summer that afternoon and along with the fact that the old church didn't have air conditioning, hell seemed even more real. After Brother Head's sermon, an invitation for sinners was given. Two or three went to the altar at that time, but I didn't feel any conviction at that time. Later, during a Christian hand shake, Sister Brenda (Thomas) Watson came to me and asked me if I was lost. I didn't even answer her. I rushed to the altar feeling condemned and I began to pray. I'm not sure how long I was on the altar, but I was there long enough for me to find my Friend that sticketh closer than a brother. I was there long enough to gain my right of passage to that heavenly country. When I realized that the Lord had saved me I raised my head up off the mourners' bench. I turned to my dad who was praying behind me, wrapped my arms around his neck and told him **"Dad I am saved"**. He went from praying on his knees to shouting and praising God with me hanging on around his neck. I didn't see lights or angels, nor did I hear bells, whistles or fireworks, when I got saved, but I did get a whole lot of peace and love that night that I still enjoy today.

Dewey Wayne Lankford

1970

During Revival

Now in Tennessee in the early summer, some years, rain makes it where burley crops have to all but be planted over again. That was the case in 1970. That year I helped my Uncle Edward Massey. It seemed like every field had so many plants to be pegged out and there was so little time. We headed to Bowman's Branch just outside of Riddleton to get started. This morning it had rained and Uncle stopped in the middle of ruts that looked long and deep. It was a given that I would have to get the gate. I asked him, "What are you doing to me?" His reply was "We need to talk". Edward reached above the visor in that old truck to get a cigarette. He tapped it slowly, lit it, and then pointed it at me. Then I heard his awful words "You're lost". Oh no, I had been found out.

The preacher, deacons and loved ones had missed me, but now the Lord had sent one of my favorite people in the world to talk to me about his goodness and mercy. He took his time and related his experience. He told me he loved me and wanted me to miss hell. I promised if He knocked again, I would answer.

I had known I was lost for a long time, but tried hard away from church to pray. In the tobacco patch, in the corn crib, chopping corn, spraying crops, never church, where I was having to white-knuckle the back of the church pew. I promised Edward that if the Lord knocked just one more time I would go to the altar.

That night Brother Charles Allen Gentry preached at our regular revival. When he took his text I remember thinking I have heard this one. It was on the Philippian jailer. He preached and I was very deeply convicted. When the first song was done, I remembered my promise, but I had made a much more serious one to God about dealing with my sins. I looked down and just like that old jailer my knees were shaking. My mother was next to me and asked if I wanted to go to the altar. I was in such a shape, I think I got just as far as I could walking and crawled the rest of the way.

I promised everything I could, asked Him to save me, begging all the while and during that time there was a small space I left all that was around me. The next thing I knew, I was smiling and happy. I remember hearing in that grand old song "and the burden of my heart rolled away." Felt light as air, not a care in the world. That was the first time I had ever felt good

about leaving church, no condemnation. I could have run all the way home.

One day I will and it will be because of that very night and the Lord caring for a lost little boy named Dewey Wayne Lankford.

Teresa Blackaby Lankford
August 8, 1978
Mt. Calvary Missionary Baptist Church
Age 13

When I was 7 years old, my parents began attending a mission in a two-story white frame house on Nolensville Road in South Nashville. This mission later was organized into a church, Mt. Calvary Missionary Baptist Church. On Sunday, August 6, 1978, Mt Calvary began a revival effort. Our pastor, Elder Henry Smith, was assisted by Bro Paul Bryson, the pastor at Old Union Missionary Baptist Church in Bowling Green, Kentucky. Bro. Bryson preached that Sunday night and the convicting power of God got a hold of me so strong that I knew I was lost and without hope. The conviction literally made me feel sick. I didn't seek God that night and I felt so sick all day Monday that I convinced my Mom that I was too sick to go to church. My Mom, however, really knew what was wrong with me. So the next night, Tuesday, August 8, 1978, Bro. Bryson preached again and this time his subject was **"hell"**. When they gave the altar call, I tried to sing and act like I was alright, but my grandmother came straight to me and asked me did I want to pray to be saved. At that point, I could go no further. The conviction of the Holy Spirit was so strong that I immediately sat back down on the pew and started praying and begging the Lord to save my soul. I don't know how long I prayed, I just know that while everyone was around me praying, I felt a sudden peace in my heart and my tears just stopped flowing. I remember my grandfather (Elder Cordell Earps, a Missionary Baptist preacher) asking me **"If you were to die, where would you spend eternity-Heaven or hell?"** I told him, "Heaven". At that moment, I remember everyone crying and rejoicing. My cousin, Kellie Petty Reddick, was also saved that same night.

Ruth Kemp

At church

Age 10

The Lord saved my soul. I attended a neighborhood church and loved to go to Church because I got to sing. During a revival at this church when the preacher was talking to the lost, I was hurting inside. I went to the altar and the Lord saved my soul. I was at peace inside, and I loved everybody, I remember looking around and I loved everybody. Thank you Lord!!!! I had gone to the altar several times before I got saved. I just knew I was hurting inside and I needed help. People prayed with me and one time someone told me I was alright and I needed to join the church and be baptized. So I was baptized, but still kept going to the altar. I am so thankful the Lord didn't give up on me. My mother went to church with me sometimes during that time, she asked me to quit going to the altar and crying. After all, I had been baptized, and I was embarrassing her. Thank you, Lord for watching over me. I was just a little girl that needed You in her life so very, very much. Thank you for impressing my heart to keep seeking You until I found You. I know You were ready to save me the first time I sought You but my heart had to be ready for You to come in. Lord, Thank you!

On Thursday night of the revival, I united with Mt. Calvary Church and was baptized by Elder Henry Smith in Percy Priest Lake.

Crystal Duke
July 25, 2006
Altar at revival
Age 11

I was saved at McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church during the revival. It was on a Tuesday night and Bro. Massey was preaching on how you need to be ready when God comes back. A little while during the service, I began to have a deep burden in my heart. I knew I was lost so I asked my grandmother Joyce to go down to the altar to pray with me. I was at the altar for about 10 minutes when I felt the burden go away. There was a deep peace that lifted over me. As soon as I felt the peace I knew I was saved and going to Heaven.

Leta Graves-Whited
August 1973
New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church

The summer before 7th Grade my mother took us to New Bethel's revival all week. Several people approached me during the week asking me if I wanted to go to the altar, but I had not felt a burden. On Sunday night, as the time came for an altar call I felt an overwhelming fear and a weight that was so heavy it was unbearable I quickly went to the altar. I was determined that I was not going to leave the church carrying that burden. People would talk to me, put their arm around me, but I was searching so hard I did not hear them. I have no idea how long I was there, but I eventually "came back" to the service and decided I was tired and wanted to go home. I didn't feel like praying anymore but was feeling confused about "was that it". After a few more minutes of feeling better and better, the confusion left. I felt so new and clean I had no doubt that God had saved me.

Lisa Anderson

At home

Age 17

I came under conviction at the age of nine one Sunday night. The preacher spoke about this terrible place called "hell" that the unsaved would go there if they were not saved. I went to pray even though I didn't know how. Everyone was praying with me, the room became quiet, so I got up. They asked if I had been saved. I joined and was baptized into the church. I went for several years with hidden fear of still being afraid to go to sleep at night. I was terrified that if I died or Jesus came back that I would not go to Heaven. At the age of 17, my father was talking to me upstairs before bed one night. He began praising I remember, but mostly I remember with every word of praise I felt more shame. I fell at his feet and started pleading for Jesus to save me. My father was surprised thinking that I had been saved all these years. He and my mother prayed with me that night. I remember that I was desperate and terrified. I was determined not to be in a hurry to get up this time until **I KNEW** that I had been saved. After a while when I felt I had closed everything out of my mind except for Jesus, I had a calmness come over me. I remember after Him saving me, I was so grateful to be able to let go of the fear I had carried for so many years. I wanted to be as close to Him as I could. I went outside rejoicing and looking toward the skies, knowing that my **GOD** in Heaven was looking down on me. It has been 18 years since He saved me, and I get full every time I think about it or tell someone.

Christine Gardner
In the fall
Pleasant Run Methodist Church
Age 12

My brother carried me to Pleasant Run Methodist Church in the fall of 1946. They were having their revival meeting. The visiting preacher preached about hell and I knew I didn't want to go there, when they gave an altar call not only me but a large group of youngsters my age and a little older literally ran to the altar. I don't know about the others but I do know about myself. I had a peace in my heart that I had not had before. I can very vividly remember how much prettier everything was afterwards. So I guess you would have to say that when He saved my soul He opened my spiritual eyes also. I'm so thankful that I know when it happened and I can show you the place.

Cathy Valdez
June 2, 1963
Rayon City Missionary Baptist Church

I was saved on June 2, 1963 at Rayon City Missionary Baptist Church. I had always enjoyed going to church, singing with the kids and being with so many people that loved me. However, a few weeks before I was saved, I had noticed that the words of the songs seemed to be bothering me and the pastor's sermons were suddenly making me think and they hadn't in the past. As the next few weeks went by, I tried hard to shut out the songs and sermons and think of anything else, but the harder I tried, the louder they were in my mind and heart. Then two weeks before the revival, the pastor's wife (Sister Blanch Smith) came to me and asked me if I was lost. I don't remember answering her; all I remember is running to the altar. After praying and believing with all my heart that God could and would save me, the most calming sweet peace came over me. It was at that moment I knew I was saved and the Heaven daddy preached about and mama talked about was all mine.

Sheryl Lynn Allen
1967
McFerrin Baptist Church
Age 13

Salvation from this world was a new beginning of self transformation and personal journey of a desire to know God, my Holy Father and Creator of all things. One who's love measures beyond this world and where forgiveness is at the core of His heart. His evidence for me is that He loves us so much that He sacrificed His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ, incarnate through the Virgin Mary so that we may be forgiven. He left us very simple instructions for living in this world but not of this world that gives us peace and joy and the experience of union in Him through His Holy Spirit here on earth.

The mystery of His Word is not revealed to me through reading Scripture alone, but through prayer, meditation and seeking guidance in His Word with the help of the Holy Spirit. Not a day goes by that I haven't had to ask for forgiveness for falling short in either thought, word or deed. However, it is through His blessings of faith that I know He forgives and it is through faith that I'm able to repent.

I don't think any writer has ever been able to accurately describe the mystery of one's personal relationship to God. For me it is through an ongoing experience and communion where He is revealed that words can't portray. But I believe that it is part of His perfect design so to build a personal relationship with each of us that He may call us friends.

For the remainder of this journey, I seek to do His will and at the end of this journey my hope is to see God and to live eternally with the One who is Faithful & True.

Dorothy Dillman
Ebenezer during the revival
Age 10

I had gone to the altar for years. One night at Ebenezer during the revival, I was sitting on the front bench of the A-women corner after the altar call, next to Mrs. Bertie Gregory. They began singing **Wayfaring Stranger**, I believe, and the tears started coming as I felt so very discouraged from seeking the Lord all those years. Afterwards, when I went out to the car to wait for Daddy, I felt this presence in the car, impressing on me that I was saved. I remember thinking that impression would go away by morning, but I still felt that way the next morning. I, never the less, continued going to the altar throughout high school. Back when I felt that impression I would think, if I am saved, when did it happen?

My mind went back to when I was 10 years old, and Bro. Lambert had preached one night in July on being determined to be saved. I remember I really tried to do that and stayed on the mourners' bench a good while, with my Mama sitting by my left side. I remember when I got home that night I had worn myself out seeking the Lord. I lay across Mama's bed and just had this easy feeling. I didn't really think anything about it and continued going to the altar for years. I would go, cry and pray awhile--- sometimes for someone else. I had the dilemma of not thinking I was saved and at the same time being concerned about others.

Finally, around 1952, I was at Mt. Tabor and I just didn't feel like going to the altar, so I didn't. I finally told someone about something happening years ago. I soon moved away from home, met and married my husband, who was unsaved. I was always trying to find an old-timey church to go to. I found one in Virginia that preached the old fashioned way, and we attended there until moving back to Nashville. In the meantime, my husband had been saved while we lived in Virginia. We were attending the revival at McFerrin and I felt burdened about joining the church. I was dreading going that night. We got there after services started and they were giving an invitation to join the church. They had just finished singing the last verse, when Bro. Ray asked them to sing it again. It was almost like it was for us. My husband and I came forward and joined the church that night. It was June 15, 1960, I believe, and we were baptized by Bro. FL. Ray on June 19, 1960.

Collin Kemp
February 20, 2007
Saved in my closet
Age 10

If you did not know, I was being home schooled last year. My mom and I were doing school work and I felt like I just had to pray. So I went up stairs and got inside my closet and started to pray and about five minutes later I was like okay. But before all of that I just felt bad, but afterward I felt good and right then I knew I was saved.

Philip Graves
August 1977
New Bethel Missionary Baptist
Age 12

I was brought up in church from a young age. My mom started taking my sister and me to Hendersonville Missionary Baptist Church when I was 5 or 6 years old. When I was 9 or 10 years old we began attending New Bethel.

I had several friends in Sunday School and church, I didn't mind going because of my friends. Bro. F.L. Ray was our first preacher and then Bro. H.C. Vanderpool.

I don't remember the exact moment I realized I was lost but I believe it was during a revival when I was almost 10 years old. My sister had gotten saved and even a friend my age was saved.

From that time on I tried to avoid going to church and avoid hearing the Gospel. My heart was heavy and I was afraid of dying. During the next two years many people at church asked me if I was lost. I always told them I was okay. I knew differently.

During the August revival of 1977 I was still denying my condition. I remember two things that happened before I admitted I was lost. I listened as the church sang "O Why Not Tonight" and Bro. Vanderpool asked me why I was not being intelligent and truthful about my condition.

I could not fight this battle anymore. I went up to the altar and poured my heart out to God. He filled me with a peace from my head to my toes. It only took a minute or two of praying. Praise God for His mercy and grace.

Christy Holt

1980

At home beside my bed

Age 10

My Grandmother, Naomi Kemp, was a Charter member of Faith Missionary Baptist Church. Faith is the church my parents and brothers joined and the church I attended from the time I was born. It was 1981 and I was almost 11 years old when God saved me during a revival at Faith Missionary Baptist Church. Jeff Lunsford and James Allen Gregory were my age and they went to the altar during the revival. That is when I fell under conviction, but I didn't go to the altar. I didn't want all eyes to be on me nor did I want anyone to see me cry and for people to cry over me. I remember the glares and stares of everyone around me when the preacher would give an altar call and I hated that feeling! Some of the ladies and the pastor would talk to me on the way home each night and I would deny that I was lost. But really I was lost, scared, and hurting inside. Each night of the revival became worse and I didn't want to go back because I wanted everyone to leave me alone and not talk to me. One night, one of the church members stood up and testified that he got saved at home. I thought, "Wow, God can save me at home. That's great news!" On the way home from revival that night, Mom again talked to me about being lost and about salvation. I could hardly keep in my tears. I was ready to burst! When we got home I went to my room and got on my knees beside my bed and prayed and prayed. I don't have a clue how long I was there or what time it was, but I remember suddenly feeling safe, secure, and happy. I wasn't scared anymore! God saved me in my bedroom right there in the floor beside my bed! Looking back, I am so thankful for my Mom and for all the people who stared and glared and asked me if I was lost. It was their prayers, words and actions that helped make my burden so heavy where all I could do is cry out to God for help. Most of all I love the Lord and am so thankful that He saved me and secured my future with Him in Heaven! Brother Arnett Gregory baptized me at Percy Priest Lake on July 12, 1981.

Angie Inman
June 1974
McFerrin Missionary Baptist
Age 12

We were in revival services in June 1974, and I was 12 years old. The first night the invitation was given, I began publicly to seek the Lord at the altar. On Thursday night, we were late to church because I had a softball game. I had secretly hoped we would be so late that we would not attempt to attend church. Thankfully, Mom and Dad were faithful in their attendance and were painfully aware that I was in a serious predicament. Church ended and the invitation was given. I sought the Lord that night just as I had the previous nights. Looking back, that was a mistake. When church was dismissed, I shamefully left the altar and went outside with other friends. I became aware that one of my friends, Dave Pomeroy, was still on the altar, and he rose up and proclaimed he was saved! There was much rejoicing, so I went back in the church and eased up to the altar area. I'm not sure what happened next, but Mom and Dad and some of my saved friends were near me, and I fell to my knees in the floor of the altar. At that time, I cried out to the Lord like no other time. I recognized that I was truly bound for hell. There was a small space in time that I'm not sure what happened. I knew that the Lord had suddenly flooded my soul with his peace and love! I quickly got to my feet and threw my arms around Mom and Dad and other church members. That next night, I presented myself for membership at McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church, and was baptized with several others by Bro. Howard Taylor at Mansker Creek.

The Lord has so richly blessed my life since that Thursday night. I have seen so many family members and friends saved due to the influence of this church. It is my daily prayer that the world will see HIM through me.

David Carver
At home in my bed
About 13

I was raised in church so I remember always being in church. I knew someday I would need to be saved. I don't recall the specific time I first knew I was lost. I think when people started asking me if I was lost I started going to the altar. My brother Johnny had started going to the altar and soon after that I did. My mother and others would ask me if I felt a burden in my heart and I did. I went to the altar for a long time, I guess a few years. It seems like it was every Sunday and every other time I went to church and we went to church a lot, many revivals and singings. One day Johnny got saved and I told them that I was saved also. I remember telling my Granny "I think I 'm saved" she said "Honey you have to know". Anyway, I was baptized and I knew I wasn't saved. I remember praying many times to be saved but I couldn't tell anybody. One night, late at night, I was so burdened, I was saying God please save me, I didn't want to be very loud, because Johnny and I slept in bunk beds and he was in the bed above me. Finally I didn't care if anyone heard me and I asked God to save me and all of a sudden it felt like the burden was just sucked out of me, like with a vacuum or something. I remember getting up and walking around in the living room in the dark, just so excited. I don't know why but I didn't tell anyone. It was many years later, I was married but I was troubled about it and I confided in my pastor, Brother Billy Dan Carter. I got up in church one day and told what had happened and was baptized. Whenever, I think of when I was saved my mind goes to the time on that bunk bed. I have strayed far and long, but the Lord has always taken care of me. I love the Lord.

Alicia McDonald

1992

At McFerrin revival

Age 7

I was saved at a revival at McFerrin when I was seven years old. I remember that Bro. Kenneth Massey was preaching the night I was saved. All I recall about my salvation experience was my walking to the altar, kneeling, and praying. It didn't take me long, I don't think, to get saved. I remember looking up at Daddy and telling him that I was saved. I also remember that my cousin Courtney was on the altar beside me. We were both saved that night. After I told Dad that I had been saved, I remember Bro. Massey coming to me and asking me many questions about my certainty of my salvation, seeing as I was only seven. I just told him yes to every question he asked.

The next day, I decided to call all of my family members to share my testimony with them. Not ten minutes after talking to most of them, I began to doubt my salvation. I was afraid that I was too young. I told dad how I was feeling and he told me that it was the devil taking my joy from me...these feelings of doubt were soon to return.

When I was about twelve, I began to doubt my salvation again, only this time it was more heavily. We were attending Vacation Bible School and I was in Ms. Betty Revercomb and Cheryl Kemp's class. We were discussing salvation in class one day, and I got really bothered by the topic; therefore, I assumed I was not saved. I got upset, naturally, and went to talk to Bro. Johnny and Sis. Jill. We talked about my condition almost every day that week, I had been thinking about my heart for months now. We were also having revival every night after VBS. It was a busy, soul-searching week! I had been to the altar to seek God many nights of the revival; it was a hard thing for me to do because everyone already assumed I was saved.

On the last day of class (VBS), we had a group prayer with all of the students and staff. I prayed with Mrs. Cheryl praying beside me and just asked God to show me where I stood. I had talked to my Sunday school teacher, Mrs. Jane, before and she told me that I would not be able to receive salvation again if I was saved, so I needed to pray for guidance and clarity. So, there I prayed on my face, in the floor, for God to show me in some way where I stood with Him. In the middle of my prayer, I just stopped and waited. I did not know what to pray anymore. I had given up

on my end and was now waiting on God to move. It was in that moment, my giving up my fight, that I felt an indescribable flood of peace throughout my entire body: from head to toe. It was like all the doubt had been cleansed away, with a rush of peace and contentment. I knew in that moment that I had been saved all along and that I would never need to doubt again. I am usually hesitant to share my testimony, for fear that it will scare someone else to think they are unsaved or confuse their minds, too, but I am SO thankful that I even have a testimony at all. Now I believe that everyone is an individual, so everyone is going to have a different story to tell and their stories will have an impact on whomever God sees fit.

William B. (Pete) Garvin

July 1950

Hudson Road

Age 12

I was returning from Neely's Bend Church one night after a Thursday evening revival service, as I was walking on Hudson Road I was praying and the Lord saved my soul. The burden I had been feeling was lifted and I knew God had saved me. I joined Neely's Bend Church of Christ where my family had been attending most of my life. My mother took my family to church all my life every time there was a service.

When Connie and I married I knew she was a Baptist. I did not understand the differences in our churches. Connie was not in favor of attending my church. She began attending Parkwood Baptist Church and taking our children. I quit going to church except on special occasions. I would attend when the children were involved in VBS or Christmas programs. My sisters told me often I needed to be in church but I was always busy on Sunday. Our son was killed in an automobile accident July of 1976. I vowed to start back to church and started attending with Connie. I knew I had missed a great deal of joy by not witnessing about my being saved. I told my experience and was baptized in 1978, becoming a member of Parkwood Baptist Church. If you are a dad, please attend church with your family from the day they are born. I know God has blessed our family as now we can study God's word, pray and worship together.

Eddie Crook
June 1968
Midland Baptist Church
Midland, TX
Age 27

I resisted the conviction of the Holy Spirit for 20 years. My wife was the greatest witness and influence in the yielding to my conviction on that Sunday night praise God for His long suffering.

Connie Garvin
June 14, 1947
Old Hopewell Baptist Church
Bethpage, Tennessee, Sumner County
Age 9

Our revival was in progress and it was on a Thursday day service. The older saints began to tell their experiences with God and how He had saved their souls and their walks with God since their salvation began.

I knew I was lost but was not under deep conviction but these experiences made me realize I should not put my salvation off any longer. I went to the altar that day. God saved my soul. God has helped me through the Holy Spirit walk closer to Him and have more faith. I was mature before I began to study God's word as much as I should. I taught 4 years olds so I only studied as a child. My prayer life was about as mature as a child's. I hope anyone that reads my testimony will begin each day with the study of God's word and begin a daily prayer life. I feel belonging to a Bible study group has encouraged me to study more in-depth.

Tim Brothers
At home in bed
Age 23

My mother had a great habit of writing to me from time to time. I still have a few of her letters; however the letter I value most is one she wrote to me a few years before she died. Before reading her letter if someone would have asked me if I was a Christian, I probably would have answered "I guess so, after all, I have been baptized and am a member of my church." After reading her letter, I was not really sure where I stood or if I was really saved at all.

Without repeating her entire letter, I would like to mention the high points. First, she mentioned that the Bible clearly teaches that the first step to salvation is repentance. In other words a person must be able to turn from his selfish, sinful nature and turn his focus to God. It is often taught that all one has to do to be save is say he believes, without there being a heart-felt repentance and sorrow for sin. Second, she wrote that the word "believe" in John 3:16 implies more than just head knowledge, the meaning of this word, in context, is to trust, rely upon, and cling to Jesus Christ in our hearts. In other words, there is a great difference in head knowledge and heart knowledge.

When I finished reading her letter, I remember thinking, "I think I am okay, or am I?" I went to bed that night and when I woke up, I began to feel afraid. As I went about my daily activities, my mind was so focused on what she had said that I could not do anything else. By the end of the day, I was so afraid that I was bound for hell if I didn't get an answer from God. I remember going to bed early that night, and literally crying out to God, asking Him to forgive me of my sins. I remember telling Him that I believe that He sent His son Jesus to die on the cross to save me. Immediately after I said this (my eyes were closed in prayer). I felt a very bright light surround me and the fear inside me left and was replaced with something I can only describe as a very intense joy. This sensation lasted probably only a few seconds, but after it was over, I experienced the greatest peace I have ever felt. The Bible calls this a "peace that transcends all understanding." I knew that when I die, or if Jesus were to return in my lifetime, I would be in Heaven for eternity.

Mark Carver
During Revival
Victory Missionary Baptist Church
Age 11

I was saved at Victory Missionary Baptist Church when I was 11 years old. It was during a revival where Brother Eugene Brown was the preacher. I was sitting on the back row, as most kids do when their parents will let them. I don't know what first got my attention, but I remember I started listening to what the preacher was saying. I had been to a lot of revivals before and had been going to church all my life. I knew I wanted to be saved but I had never really been under conviction. I wasn't convinced yet. I remember Bro. Brown was really preaching it hot. That's when I got under conviction the Holy Spirit moved in me and my heart was in trouble. As I sat in the back row with my heart pounding, Bro. Brown started coming to me. This only made my heart worse. He came to me and asked me if I was lost. I told him I was. As we headed to the altar, I remember Bro. Brown wasn't moving fast enough for me so I took off to the altar. I hit my knees and started to beg God to forgive me and for Him to please save me. He did. I remember the burden and pounding in my chest had gone away. To be honest it wasn't what I expected. I thought I was supposed to see Jesus or angels or something, but I did not. I just received peace. I thank God for that peace because that means I am a child of God and I can call Him Father.

Pam Christiansen Banks

September 24, 2001

Parking Lot at TCMC

Age 38

In August of 2001 I took off from work just to do some errands and spend some time with my son. We had been gone from my home for several hours and returned around noon. I was having a problem with my car and left shortly after noon to have it checked out. When I left the house there were some men working on the street in front of my house. I was gone a little over an hour and upon my return I noticed that something was wrong. The machine I had seen earlier had 4 men on it, one laying flat on his back. I hurried and parked, got out of my car and asked if they needed help. I asked if anyone had called 911, they said no. I called 911 and then asked what happened to him. He had been electrocuted. He didn't live. This hit me really hard. I just kept thinking that the man went to work that morning never thinking he wouldn't be going home that night. I still don't know his name but he played a part in the change of my life. Since then I have really thought that God had to have perfect timing for that to have happened at that exact time.

Shortly after this I met Tom Banks. If you have come to McFerrin much you probably know Tom, he is very friendly. The first night I talked to Tom he started telling me about Jesus. I hadn't been to church on a regular basis for 23 years. I was as lost as a person could get. I had taken classes when I was 13 to become a Catholic because all my friends were. I didn't even know what a Catholic was but I was one. Anyway, Tom and I had gone to the Aquarium and Lookout Mountain and were returning home when Tom said pick a cassette out of the bag in the back and we'll listen to some preaching. Well I looked in the bag and saw a tape that said "**Lost**" on it and I handed it to him and said here this is me. I told him that night that I was as lost as lost could get, he just kept talking to me about getting saved. I really didn't even know what that was. I knew though that he had something that I wanted. The more he talked the more I wanted to know. Then one day on a Monday morning, September 24th I went to work and felt like someone had their head laying across my heart all day. That night I went to see Tom and told him something was going on and he prayed with me and we listened to some sermons on tape and I left his house knowing that I would not make it home until I got right and asked the Lord into my life. I pulled into the parking lot of Tennessee Christian Medical

Center and asked the Lord into my life. I asked Him to take over, to lead me and help me to be the person He wanted me to be. I can't remember all I prayed about but I know I cried like I had never cried in my life. I asked the Lord to forgive me for taking so long to come to Him and that I knew that I was a sinner and needed forgiveness. And I cried more. Then all of a sudden I stopped crying and the weight on my heart was gone. Something told me to look up and I did and saw these people walking toward where I was parked and I realized I was in a hospital parking lot and those people would think I needed help. I didn't realize it until later but the Lord was already watching out for me. Since that day nothing has been the same. Everything has been different for me. I've been blessed in so many ways and I never knew until now.

Jamie Hulshof
December 9, 2007
McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church
Age 30

I was saved during church on Sunday, December 9, 2007. I had been praying for my salvation for months. During the service that day, I felt a wave of peace wash over me. I did not realize at that moment what had happened. I prayed for confirmation about what I had felt/was feeling. I received the confirmation I needed and knew that I truly was saved that day.

Nicole Morris
August 9, 1979
On the way home from revival
Age 9

As a little girl, I did not have the privilege that most of the McFerrin family has had with the accessibility of a church that offers so much to their members. As a matter of fact, I did not have a church to attend until I was about 10 or eleven years old. Growing up in Clarksville, TN a Missionary Baptist Church was nowhere to be found in the area. My mother, Charlotte Stewart Sykes was the head of our family when it came to church and she stood strong on the faith that she had learned from the Lord what was told to her by her father, a beloved preacher of God's Word, Brother Luther (L.A.) Stewart. She never wavered on what she believed and knew as the truth. I remember her stating, "I'll have church at home before I will raise my children in a church that is not preaching the truth", and she did just that.

Most of mom's family lived in Gallatin, TN and attended West End Missionary Baptist Church. Every summer I would spend the week of VBS with my cousins and sponge in all that a little mind could hold about God's Word and His love. When revival time rolled around every year, I was sitting on a pew. Of course, most of the time I was talking and playing, but heard just enough of God's words among the people there to let me know about the plan of salvation and what it would mean in my life. It is amazing how God's Word can be in every situation; even though I was playing with friends. With a summer revival in 1979 at the same church that I had spent many VBS and revivals before; this one would prove to be the one of a changing time in my life and heart. My uncle was under conviction and was already married and with a family when he went down to an altar of prayer that evening. Watching him and being someone I was close to really made an impression on a nine year old girl. Before, it was just unknown faces, sometimes with tears in their eyes calling upon the Lord to save their souls. Now it came closer to home. I would always dread the altar call. I knew at least three or four people would come back and want to talk to me about my soul's condition. My soul's condition was fine and it truly was until that night. This Sunday night of revival, August 9, 1979 we were on our way home. I just didn't feel good. I thought it was maybe something I ate, or nerves about something else. I asked if we could pull into a gas station. Maybe going to the restroom would help. Not this night. After returning to

the car, an old huge dark blue Buick with four doors, Mom said to lay down in the back seat and I would feel better soon. I remember looking up at the sky out of the side window at all the thousands of beautiful stars that God had hand placed in the sky when He revealed my soul's condition. It wasn't a stomachache from anything I had done, but the revelation that God was talking to me and it was my time to come to Him. The feeling I felt that night was one of fear. I was scared that I would not be with my Lord if something happened. I knew I wanted to be with God and have Him with me always. I don't remember what I said or even how long it took. I just remember it was not long and automatically I suddenly felt better.

I did not tell my experience for several years. I guess I thought I would see something. Mom did! It was storming when she got saved. She told her mom she was glad the sun was shining. When, in fact, it was still raining. I didn't see anything, but felt the peace. God spoke to me one morning that it was time to tell what He had done for me that night on I-24 W somewhere between the Springfield exit and our home. I went into the kitchen to tell mom. Afterwards she said she knew what I was going to tell her. That morning confirmed for me I could not doubt any more about my salvation. God spoke to me and mom confirmed it. I remember a preacher once told me "you can't doubt it if you don't have it."

Thinking back we thought it was such a long way to go to church for a week of revival and VBS. We could not go every night or every week. There are many churches in Clarksville that we could attend, but the price is too much to pay to jeopardize the salvation of my children, my grandchildren and on. I could not go on knowing my children had been deceived just because of our decision of where to attend church. Not on purpose would they deceive them but the way of others' teaching. Now my family and I drive 35 miles one way to attend church Sunday and Wednesday nights. Now MY church has VBS and revivals. I have a church for my children, Carlye and Lake, to learn of God's Word and love and will truly be saved some day because of the truth that is being preached at McFerrin. Eric and I joined this church on Sunday, July 15, 2001. It is worth every mile to church to be able to stand and worship and praise my God. I am thankful for His guidance and leadership and for my McFerrin church family.

David Garrett
Christmas 1951
In Germany

I was born in Decatur, Alabama on July 19, 1928. I was brought up in a Christian home, taught right from wrong, later in life found out you had to hear the true gospel preached and trust in the Lord to be saved. When we moved to Nashville I was about 10 years old (after school enrollment) during summer vacation. I would go to the Old Union Station and ride a train to Decatur, Alabama where I stayed with my Aunt Mammie. We would go to church every time the doors were opened and also to tent revivals. When I got older I quit going to Decatur. I started to visit the First Church of the Nazarene on Woodland Street. This was during the 1940's, in my senior year at East High School, and I had just gotten a job in printing, November 6, 1946, at Cullom & Ghertner. This is where I met Dot, now my wife, and Best Friend. That is when I started going to McFerrin, 1949-1950, after we set a date to get married. I was drafted but we went on and got married in the basement of Old McFerrin Church on September 16, 1950.

I left for the Army nine days later. McFerrin is where I had heard the true gospel, preached by Bro. Henry Smith and Bro. F.L. Ray and others during the year 1949-1950. Before I left for the service on September 25, 1950, Dot's mother, Myrtle and sister Vondell, gave me a Bible and a book titled "Strength for Service To God and Country". The book had a Daily Devotional message for those in the service which I cherished. Both went to Germany with me and I read from them every night.

Christmas of 1951, I was reading from the Book "Christmas Discovery The Word was made flesh and He dwelt among us", when all of a sudden peace came over me and I started crying. My bunk buddy asked me if I was crying because I missed my wife and I said yes and no. I told him that my heart was heavy and that I had been praying and asking God to save me and that I had a change in my heart and made peace with the Lord. It was a wonderful experience. If I die before this is put in the church book, please believe that I know that I am SAVED—SAVED. I am proud to be a member of this Body of Christians at McFerrin. I will see you in Heaven, Love you All.

Bro F.L. Ray baptized me in October 1955 and it was cold, cold until this very day. I believe that the prayers of the Saints that have gone to

Heaven to be with God were answered when I went to Germany and not Korea.

Minnie Overton
July 1939
By the side of my bed
Age 15

I had been very ill and I got out of my bed and knelt down by my bedside. I ask the Lord to forgive me of all my sins; the ones that I was aware of and the ones that I was not aware of so I could go to Heaven when I died. I asked Him to always make me do His will whether I wanted to or not. As I knelt there and I thought wouldn't it be wonderful to be married to someone like Jesus? I just felt His presence behind me. I turned around and looked behind me. I got up and got back into bed and felt this warm peaceful feeling come over me.

Vance Overton
August 1942
New Bethel Baptist Church
Age 19

I was saved when I bowed at the altar and prayed to God for my soul's salvation. As I prayed and even though it was a dark night it seems like the roof of the church opened up and the sun shined down on me. At that time my burden for my soul was lifted and I started to pray for some of my loved ones who had not been saved. My brother was there Eld. William Overton and he started singing an old song that we used to sing called I am a Millionaire. At that time I knew I was one of those Millionaires who had been saved by the Grace of God.

Bro. Sloan was the Pastor and Bro. Hubert Brooks was helping in the Revival meeting. Bro. Sloan baptized me in Mansker Creek.

Ruth Taylor Gregory
1943
Hillsdale Baptist Church
Age 10

In September of 1943, I realized I was lost. They were having a revival at Hillsdale Baptist Church, which was about a mile from Hillsdale School. The school would dismiss anyone who wanted to go to the revival. On Friday I walked with all the other children and went to church. I went to the altar and was saved that day. That afternoon my brother and sister rushed home to tell my parents thinking, I would be in trouble for leaving school. But all I could think about was my burden and that troubled feeling was gone. I knew I was saved!! I joined Meadorville Church in October and was baptized by Bro. W.T. Russell.

Breanne Carver
March 11, 2008
McFerrin Church Revival
Age 12

I was saved March 11, 2008 at revival Tuesday night. My dad Mark Carver was preaching. Now at this time I was lost and had been for two years. I couldn't tell you a word he said in his sermon, but when we sang the altar call song I thought I was going to fall straight through the floor to hell. I was terrified. This was the strongest conviction I had ever felt. Well I kept telling myself to go but I was stubborn and did nothing. I kept looking around to see if anyone was coming for me but no one was, and I just kept standing there doing nothing! When finally my mom looked over at me, then back to her book, closed her eyes and said "Just do it". At first I thought she was talking to GOD. So I looked over at her and once again she said "Just do it" then I knew she was talking to me. I asked her to come with me and she said okay. We went to the altar and I knew as soon as I hit the floor that I was saved!! I continued to pray because I knew when I raised my head that Bro. Johnny would ask me if I knew that I knew that I knew. So I prayed and cried then I stopped because I knew that I knew. I stood up, joined the church and was baptized the next Sunday!!!!

Richard McDonald

July 19, 1951

Maple Grove Missionary Church #2

Age 2-1/2 months short of being 10

I was saved at Maple Grove Missionary Baptist Church #2 in Macon County, Tennessee. It seemed that I had been going to the mourners' bench all my life because my Mom and Dad had taken all of us kids (6) to every revival (it seemed) within a 100 mile radius when any of us were lost.

But this night proved to be different. I lacked about 2 ½ months being 10 years old. I was saved on July 19, 1951. I was pleading for Jesus to save me and all of a sudden it was just like I was in an inverted tornado heading straight to hell; and, the tunnel just kept getting smaller and smaller. Then all of a sudden, of course, it happened. God had saved my soul. I wish that I could say that I jumped up and tried to tell the whole world, but I can't. The very next second, I was already doubting it. As a payback from the Lord, I got to go to every revival, in the same churches, that I had been to before. Finally, I knew that I had all the salvation that the Lord was going to give me. This was on the first Monday after the second Sunday in July, 1953. Yes, I had waited 2 years. But this year, I was ready for Mrs. Cozy Reagan to make a beeline for me as soon as the altar call was given. I told Mrs. Cozy when I was saved, and she said, "Well, don't you think it's time that you tell the rest of the world." I definitely agreed; and, that was the second best service that I have ever been in. Praise God for salvation; if you don't have it, get it.

Pamela Garrett Reynolds
McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church
Age 9

I was saved at age nine during a fall revival at McFerrin. For a long time I was so scared I wouldn't know when I was lost. I remember sitting in the kitchen and asking my mom just how would I know? She assured me I would realize it. That God would let me know and that I would feel it in my heart. One night during that fall revival, right after Brother Ray finished preaching, I knew. I told my mom I was sick. She asked if I felt lost? I told her yes and went to the altar. It didn't take long before peace came. I remember telling Brother Ray I felt saved. I joined the church the following Sunday and was baptized in Mansker Creek soon after.

Zach Petitt
March 22, 2010
McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church
Age 12

I had been praying for about two years. Then one night at the revival, my heart was pounding. So I went to the altar and prayed for about five minutes and then He saved me. But I didn't tell anybody until later that night at home.

Luke Petitt
July 30, 2008
My Bedroom
Age 8

One Wednesday night during the revival, I was listening to Bro. Johnny's sermon. After a while, my heart just started getting heavier and heavier as the night went on. After that I knew I was lost. While I was in my car, I was thinking about what would happen if I died right then and where I would go. When we got home, I went straight to my bed and prayed. About 15 minutes after I had started praying, the burden was gone and I knew I was saved.

Carla Shoulders Petitt
October 4, 1977
McFerrin Baptist Church
Age 11

I was saved during the fall revival at McFerrin. On Monday night after the sermon Sis. Joan Oldham came and asked me if I was lost. I was already lost, but when she asked me I knew I had to go to the altar to pray. I prayed that night, but I wasn't saved. I remember the next day being the longest day. I was miserable, and I remember my Mom talking to me after school. We went back to church that night. I sat by my Dad that night in the A-men corner. I didn't think the sermon would ever end so I could go pray. Sometime that night as I was at the altar I ended up on the floor. The Lord spoke peace to my soul that night.

Hollis Ray Webb
October 1950
Old McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church
Age 13

I was born on May 13, 1937 in Webbtown, Macon County, TN to Ruby L. West Webb and Clayton W. Webb. We moved to Nashville when I was about 3 years old. I was saved when I was 13 years old and joined McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church at the age of 16. In October 1953, I was baptized by Bro. F. L. Ray.

Audra Woodall Hines
July 10, 1999 Summer Revival
Age 15

Although I don't remember exactly how long I had been lost, I know I was lost for a while before I did anything about it. Being raised in a Missionary Baptist Church, I knew what I needed to do, but I was stubborn. Every summer when the revival would come around I would feel my burden intensifying. I would play it cool when they gave the altar call and always told myself I would pray later. Each summer I was finding it harder and harder to just sit there and basically lie to people when they asked me if I was lost. The weekend before the revival began in July 1999, I was at home watching a movie. In the movie the mom had cancer, was losing her battle and was saying goodbye to her family. For whatever reason, I really started feeling concerned for myself and where I would go if I died. I knew that if it were my mom in that situation she would go to Heaven and I would never get to see her again. So, later that night in bed, with my cat who slept with me every night, I began praying for God to save my soul. I'm not sure how long it took, but He saved me that night and my burden was gone. I do remember looking over at the clock and it was 11:30 PM when He saved me. Those who know me, know that I'm not much of a singer, but that night I sang "Victory in Jesus" to my cat. I went to sleep that night without telling anyone (besides the cat) what had happened to me. The revival began that week and I still hadn't told anyone. The plan was for me to go spend part of the week with my Aunt Bat in KY. She spoke during the service asking prayer for me because she wouldn't be able to bring me back every night. My mom spoke and asked prayer for me as well because I'd just gotten my learner's permit and she was already afraid of me driving not knowing whether I was saved or not. At this point I'm feeling really terrible for not telling anyone, but I was so shy and scared and didn't want all of the attention. Of course, the parade of people started coming over to me and there was one lady, I don't remember her name, but I'll never forget her face. She asked me if I was lost and I said no. She asked me if I was saved and I just sat there. Then she reminded me of all my family members who were so concerned about me and how I should tell them not to worry if I was saved. I smiled at her and realized the importance of telling my experience I had at home. I remember going to where my mom was and telling her that she didn't have to worry anymore because I was saved. The feeling I had after telling her was pure joy. It was almost like another smaller burden had been lifted and I could finally enjoy what God had done

for me. One of the first people I called after church that night was Sue Johnson. She was my Sunday school teacher at Rayon City and I believe she spent a lot of time praying for me. God placed certain people in my life who influenced me greatly and shaped the whole story of my salvation experience. I'm so thankful He puts people in our path to keep us on His path and I'm mostly thankful that He saved my soul.

Troy Ellis
Age 10

I began feeling that I was missing something on the car ride home. I remember asking my parents if they were saved and being a child and not overly loud they didn't hear me. Then I was very concerned and worried. I prayed in my bed that night and gave everything I had up to God and He saved me. That was the most comforting peace that I have ever felt. The devil did his best and I didn't tell anyone that I was saved until I was 15. I know my parents were worried that I never went to altar calls, or even mentioned anything and one night at a revival they had an altar call and they wanted me to go up there and I got up to go for them and instead told my Dad that there was no need. I told him when and where I got saved. It is great to know that I have a time and place.

Logan Ellis

Age 7

I was 7 years old and on a hot May day, I remember being in serious trouble. After being scolded for what I had done, my mom continued to tell me that God would not be proud of what I had done and that if I didn't feel remorse for it, that I should pray to God and that He would save me from the devil and take me into Heaven when it was my time to go. And right there on my Mom's bed He knocked on my heart and I answered. I remember crying for awhile, and then I told everyone; everybody including family, my friends, and even my 2nd grade teacher. And that's my salvation experience.

Austin Ellis

Age 10

I was saved two weeks after my younger brother, Logan. Anyways, I was ten years old and it was on a Tuesday night at the revival. I forgot who was preaching that night but all I remember was feeling awful. I guess my mom saw the look on my face, and God told her if I needed to pray, of course, I myself already knew that I needed to pray, I just needed some help in the process. Well, I finally went to pray in the Sunday School room, being ten I tried to bargain with God, trying to give Him my toys I had at the time. That was dumb because I spent at least an hour trying to do that. By that time, the whole church knew I was seeking and went to pray with me. After what seemed like forever I was finally saved. I realized that I had to put everything aside and just trust in Him.

Carlye Morris
March 3, 2010
At Home
Approximately 6:00 PM
Age 8

It was a beautiful and warm afternoon in Missouri. I had been at Active Kids Club which is an after school recreational program at my school, Mill Creek Elementary School. Normally we would be on our way to Wednesday night church, but today Mom and Lake had been home with allergies. We decided we would not go to church tonight. Mom came to pick me up. On the way home, Mom and I talked about God and how I wanted to know why He had not answered my prayers. We talked more about what those prayers were about--two friends at school and how I wanted them to come to church with me. I also wanted to know why you could go to Heaven, but not come back to earth. When we got home we walked in the door and daddy was home. We all talked and I asked why God had not saved me and that I was ready and wanted it to happen soon. Mom asked me if I felt lost and I said no. If something were to happen to you, where do you believe you would go? I said I thought I would go to Heaven. Daddy said that I might want to go to my room and pray, talk to God and tell Him what I was thinking and what I was feeling.

When I went to my room all was OK, but then I shut my door and my heart began to hurt. I had never felt this before and it was horrible. I began to cry and it got louder and louder as I yelled out to God. I was asking Him over and over, please save me! At one point mom said she heard me say, I will pray a million times a day if that is what you want me to do. Mom came in and I looked up at her with a look she said she had never seen before and grabbed both of her arms and cried Momma, please help me, I cannot take this anymore. I prayed more and more then all of a sudden, I stopped crying. I was sitting up on my knees with the strangest look on my face, as mom and dad tell people. I asked them what just happened. They asked me the same thing. I said it again and they said the same thing again. I looked up and said, I just got saved! Mom and dad asked me questions and what I felt and what I did? I told them I felt so bad and had never felt that way before. My stomach hurt and my chest hurt right under my ribs. I felt the burden! It was horrible! I began praying and asking God to save me. I don't remember how long, I just remember all of a sudden that burden was gone. God was right beside of me and pushed my sins

away and sent them to Satan. God told Satan that was all he was getting from His little girl. I felt Him right beside of me. I know I am saved and it is the most wonderful feeling I have ever felt. I could not stop smiling and laughing and dancing around the room.

I was baptized by Bro. Johnny Carver on Sunday May 9, 2010 on Mother's Day.

Anna Austin
At Home

I would like to share my salvation experience. One normal night, everyone was doing as they normally do, and I was looking in my bedroom mirror with the door close asking myself and looking up and also asking the Lord all kinds of questions. The last thing I asked Him was "Will I be saved?". So I knelt to the side of my low roll-away bed and prayed. I cried also because, I wanted to get this heavy feeling off me. So then I was close to finishing my prayer, I told Him to give me a sign, any kind of sign. Afterwards, I went to the bathroom to wash my teary face and then I heard this big pour of water out of the tub for about two seconds. Then I felt this burden off me and realized I had been saved. I have been saved for a year and a half now!!!

Penny Ehrhart

I was on the altar for several years before I was saved and I really don't remember my age but I do remember when and where. I was on the altar one night late with John and Angela. Angela got up and told she had been saved and then some time went by and John got up and told he was saved. I remember thinking and crying out for me to be saved but I was holding on to something or trying to say the right thing. Finally my dad asked if he could do anything and I asked the church to pray that whatever I was holding on to that I would just let it go and turn it over to God. As soon as I said that, the burden was gone and I knew that I had been saved I could not pray or cry anymore.

Brenda Dillehay Hayes

August Revival

New Bethel

Age 11

It was during the August revival at New Bethel (the old building) with Bro. Russell and Bro. Vanderpool preaching. I was a little eleven year old girl sitting beside my Mother listening to the preacher who seemed to be speaking directly to me and it was one of those HOT old time sermons that Bro. Russell was so good at giving. As he preached, I began to really listen and began to squirm, got very scared and knew for the very first time that I was lost and would not go to Heaven if I didn't ask God to forgive my sins and save me. As soon as the invitation was given, Mother asked me if I wanted to go to the altar to pray and I said YES!

I remember praying so hard and nothing happened. I went back to the altar the next day and continued to pray when finally I just said God I don't know what else to do, please save me and with that, peace came and the burden was lifted as if a huge weight had been taken from my heart. I sat there a few minutes not knowing if that was it when I heard someone say, I believe she's been saved. My Mother asked me if anything had happened and I told her about the burden being taken away, that's when I understood what had just happened and that God had just saved my soul. After telling about being saved, I remember rejoicing in my heart and wanted all my friends to be saved too; several were during that revival. At that revival, I joined the church and was baptized in the creek, off Old Springfield Pike, Goodlettsville, TN by Bro. W. T. Russell.

My experience seems like so many others who are blessed to have grown up in church and had good Christian parents who always took them to church and revivals. We were taught about being saved and knew that when God touched our heart, we would know the meaning of being lost and what we must do to be saved. Thank God I was one of those children and God heard my prayer!

Terry Hayes
1963
New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church
Age 21

I was saved in 1963 when I was twenty one years old at a revival at New Bethel. I was not raised in a Missionary Baptist church, so I didn't know about getting saved, and had never heard that kind of preaching. I thought that if I believed in God and what the Bible taught, that I was all right. I would go to church with Brenda just to be with her. We married in June of that year and I would go to church with her but never got under conviction. Some of the ladies in church would ask me from time to time if I was lost, and I would always say NO.

One night during the revival, Bro. W. T. Russell was preaching and I thought he was talking directly to me. I had no intention of going to an altar in front of all those people, but I could not help from going. When the invitation was given, it was like someone had me by the hand and leading me to the altar. I went to my knees and begged God to save my soul. It seemed like I was on the altar for an hour. I remember thinking that God would not save a sinner boy from West Nashville, so I got up off the altar and went out and sat on the church steps. I had only seen one other person get saved; she jumped up and shouted when she was saved, so I thought that would happen to me. I don't know the exact moment I was saved, but it happened sometime between when I left the altar and sat down on the steps. I felt no burden at all and felt really good, but I still thought I didn't have what Marsha got. On the way home, Brenda asked me how I felt and I told her that I didn't have a burden and felt good, but I didn't know if I had been saved. We talked about it and I realized everyone would not feel the same. I thank God for my salvation and giving me a wonderful Christian wife that insisted I go to church with her. And, I thank God for my salvation.

Lee Wallin
July 27, 2007
McFerrin Baptist Church
Age 50

Never growing up in a church, I had never heard about being saved, only to be baptized and then you would go to Heaven. I really never felt lost.

Jeanne Cox, my sister-in-law, invited me to McFerrin's July revival on a Monday night. I found reasons not to go all week. Finally, on Friday, July 27th, the last night of revival, I had nothing to do so I decided to go. I enjoyed the singing and the sermon but was ready to leave when Bro. Johnny made the altar call. Bro. Eugene Brown came over and asked me if I knew Jesus. I resisted at first and Bro. Brown kept talking to me, so I figured I'd go up to the altar, so then I could go. I grabbed my brother, Mike Cox's hand and all three of us went to the altar. I didn't know what to pray for, but after a few minutes, I just started praying and all of a sudden felt the need for Jesus in my life. I am not sure what I said or even how long I was praying and crying out to GOD, but all at once I felt such a burden lifted, that I didn't even know I had. I felt hot, really hot at first, then such joy as I've never known. I knew then that I would be with Jesus when I died and would go to Heaven. I had never felt that way before. That's the night that GOD saved me and I'm forever grateful to Jeanne and Mike for inviting me to go and to Bro. Brown for not letting up on me.

Sheila Hester
August 1976
New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church
Age 10

I had gone to church all of my life and had learned about salvation and being lost at an early age but never felt lost myself until August 1976. I was sitting in church on a Sunday morning and a lady in the church got up and sang a song. During this song is when the conviction hit me. I was only 10 and did not realize that I was lost. My mother asked if I was lost and I said I did not know. Our revival started that night. I did not go to the altar the first night. I knew that is what I had to do. It was either the second or third night of the revival and I said to God, if just one other person would go to the altar, then I would go. A man in the church went to the altar and I immediately went after him. I just remember praying to God to save me. I do not know how long I was there but I got saved that very night. I just felt a real heaviness lifted off of my chest and felt peace. I told about my salvation that very night but then began to doubt it. I doubted it for many years but the Lord has let me know that is where I was saved and I know without a shadow of a doubt that I am saved and I got saved that very night.

Tony Maynard
Edgefield Baptist Church
Age 10

I was saved when I was ten years old at Edgefield Baptist Church in East Nashville. I had been attending Edgefield for my entire life with my parents. The Sunday I was saved I was in Sunday School with one of my Sunday School teachers, and a deacon of the church, Mr. John Cuffman. Sunday School had finished and I stayed behind to talk to Mr. Cuffman about being saved. I was one of those kids that asked a lot of questions. I needed to know where I stood with God and Mr. Cuffman helped me understand. I was lost!

Our Sunday School class met in an upstairs classroom of a newer part of the church. The stairs leading up to our class were steep, and for a ten year old, looked dangerous. Mr. Cuffman asked me that morning if I were to fall down those stairs and die did I know where I would spend eternity. I didn't know how to answer his question. I told him that I come to church every Sunday and that my Mom has always made sure I behaved and that I thought that was probably enough and I would go to Heaven. My answer to his question became obvious to me, I was not saved and we both knew it. I told Mr. Cuffman that I didn't want to go to hell, and that I wanted to be saved, that I wanted to spend eternity in Heaven. I asked him what I needed to do, how I could "get saved". Mr. Cuffman told me that there wasn't anything I could do that God would take care of it. I knew that I was lost and began to cry out with Mr. Cuffman for God to save me. Mr. Cuffman did not save me that morning, I did not save me that morning, God saved me. Mr. Cuffman and I prayed that my uncertainty about eternity would be settled and that Jesus would put my name in His book giving me salvation and saving me. I was saved that morning after Sunday School in the upstairs classroom of Edgefield Baptist Church.

Mr. Cuffman and I were about twenty minutes late to church that morning. It was obvious to my parents that I had been crying but I was smiling when I came into church. My parents asked where I had been and scolded me for being late. I waited until the end of the service and the invitational hymn was sung and I sprinted out of the pew before the first verse got finished. I stood in front of the congregation for two more verses of the song, crying again, anxiously waiting to tell everyone that I was saved. My parents and grandmother were crying by this time and Mom then understood why I was late and what Mr. Cuffman and I had been

doing after Sunday School. I was baptized the next Sunday and have never doubted my salvation experience since.

Mr. Cuffman died several years ago and I remember going to the funeral home and telling his family my salvation experience. Most of his family had never heard it. Some of them had known me for my entire life and didn't know the impact my former Sunday School teacher had on me. I told them that he didn't save me but he helped guide me to salvation. He knew I was lost. He knew I was under conviction. He knew what I needed to do and he knelt down in that classroom with me as I cried out to God to save me.

Brenda Watson

October 12, 1969

At Home

Age 8

My family was visiting a church in the area during their revival. We attended Dixon Creek Missionary Baptist Church. We were at Ebenezer Missionary Church the Sunday of their week long revival. Conviction hit me like a ton of bricks! I told my mother, "I don't feel just right." I knew what was happening. I had never felt so scared or out of sorts. I didn't want to go to the altar but began to pray. I prayed through the afternoon. There was a moment when I was praying that I realized--I feel better. It wasn't at all what I thought it would or should be. The devil immediately convinced me that that moment wasn't "it". I kept praying throughout the next week at my home church's revival. But it finally came to me that the moment I had had was "it". It still didn't seem like enough, so at times in my early years of life, and even at times into my adult life, I had doubts. But the bottom line is, the Lord wasn't going to give me more of a salvation experience than what He had planned especially for me. My experience, like everyone else's, is special and unique, just like He planned it and it will carry me to Heaven when the Father calls me home. Since then, there have been many shining moments of confirmation of my salvation. They don't happen all of the time, but when they do, that quiet assurance is saying, "yes"!

Mary Ezzell
Golden, Mississippi
Age 12

Preston Ezzell
Golden Mississippi
Age 18

Parker Hooten
March, 11, 2008
McFerrin Missionary Baptist Revival
Age 9

I had been lost for about three years, then at the McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church revival the burden got real heavy. I got under a church bench and started praying. Then about 30 minutes later, I just got up and thought "That had to be it!" then I told my testimony, joined the church, and got baptized.

Almerine Thomas

1937

At Home in the Living Room

Age 13

We had church at Sycamore Valley once a month. On Saturday we went to church, my older brothers and sisters would come home with us to spend the night and go back to church on Sunday. My Aunt and her son were at our house on Saturday night, he was reading in the Bible about the broad and narrow way and I got under conviction and was saved that night. I joined Sycamore Valley several years later and was baptized by Bro. Calvin Gregory.

Rhonda Swaffer Everett

July 8, 1977

Know Spring Missionary Baptist Church

Age 9

I had gone all week of the revival praying in the closet and everywhere else. I was miserable and begging God to save me. I would be up all night praying and promising God anything and everything if He would just take that awful feeling away. Friday night, even though I had done all I knew to do, I went to the altar to pray one more time. I was going through the motions this time because I didn't know what to do any different this time. I sat down in front of the pulpit thinking how great it would be to get saved in that spot. About as soon as I sat down, everything went black and I saw green dots going down one right after another into that deep black pit. I remember thinking that's me if I don't get saved. I'm going to go to that deep black pit—hell! I would burn forever if I didn't make things right with God. All of a sudden, my crying stopped and an incredible peace, calmness, and stillness came over me. I didn't know what had happened so I let the devil talk me into sitting there and trying to cry some more. He told me everyone would look at me if I got up and I didn't know what had happened anyway. After a few moments of this "trying to cry," I realized how stupid this was. I had NOTHING to cry about anymore!

Jerial Woodall

July 1966

Pleasant Hill Missionary Baptist Church

Age 9

I was saved during the revival in July 1966 at Pleasant Hill Missionary Baptist Church in Portland, TN. I joined Pleasant Hill Missionary Church and was baptized on August 6, 1966.

Jeremiah Lambert
August 1999
McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church
Age 7

I was seven years old when I got saved. It was when the choir was coming down. And I wasn't embarrassed. I was just bawling. I couldn't stop. I knew I was lost that moment. My mom asked me if I wanted to go to the altar. I went right away. I was up there for about fifteen minutes. I kept asking the same thing, "Lord, please save me." There was nothing else on my mind than getting saved. I got saved and I got up and just felt like shouting. I thank God my Dad was kneeling beside me on the altar and he saw me get saved. Forever Friends.

Sabrina Carver
November 23, 1991
Philadelphia, PA
Age 21

I found Jesus after almost a week of solid seeking and praying. The Lord let me know I was lost on a Sunday morning and I went to the altar and prayed. I got up and decided I just had not been living good enough and that must be the reason for the burden I felt. That night I drove back to college and the burden was still with me. I prayed myself to sleep. When I opened my eyes the next morning the burden was still there. That whole week was spent in prayer, alone and with many of God's people. Satan had a strong hold on me. He kept feeding me the lie that I was okay, and not lost. On Friday, I had to go to Philadelphia with my parents and Mark. Mark and I were getting married in May and he was meeting my grandparents. We flew to the city of brotherly love. Later, we decided to drive to Atlantic City. We went to the Trump Taj Mahal for an evening of entertainment. Everything about that place and that night caused my conviction to worsen (if that was possible). We arrived back at my grandparents' house around 2:00 AM. I got ready for bed and then got the Bible out of my suitcase. I remember saying, "Okay, Lord let's try this again." I was at the end of myself; the end of hope in me. The Lord opened His Word to Matthew, Chapter 7. Those words verified my lost condition and what my end would be without Jesus. It was in Matthew, Chapter 9 that the words of Jesus spoke to my soul and gave me the faith I needed to trust Him in the centurion's story. I said, "Lord, save me" and He did! Before I could even get the words out of my mouth I felt an incredible presence come over me. It was like a tingle that filled me from head to toe. I remember saying "This is it, isn't it Lord!" "Yes, it is" that wonderful Spirit continued to say to my heart. I jumped out of bed and went into Mark's room and told him. Then I woke my parents up. I also called Bro. Paul Cofer, my pastor in Hendersonville, at about 3:00 AM. The next day was a new day, brighter than I could have ever imagined; even though the sky was cloudy.

Frances Johnson
August 1949
White Hill Missionary Baptist Church
3 weeks before turning 16

I had a great-great uncle who could neither read nor write, but he loved God. He would visit us often. He would have my family and me read the Bible to him. God gave him a wonderful ability to memorize the Word of God. Uncle Roe would always say to me "Baby, how is it with your soul?" I became convicted, went to the altar, and as I prayed, I fell on the concrete floor in the basement of White Hill Church and God wonderfully saved my soul. The next night I joined White Hill Church. My mother's father and also my father's mother joined. We were all three baptized the same day. Elder William Wright baptized me. He was the pastor of White Hill Church at that time.

Elaine Swaffer

July 25, 1957

Mace's Hill Missionary Baptist Church

Age 9

It was during the revival when the Lord convicted me of my sins. I made an altar on the front seat of the Amen corner. I was young but I knew if I died at that moment, hell would be my home. I was begging the Lord to save my soul. All that I was aware of was the heavy burden that I had. When I promised the Lord I would do anything if He would save my soul, I heard a voice say, "Get up." I had never heard that voice before. I heard the voice again say, "Get up." The next thing that I knew, I was in my Daddy's arms and my Daddy was shouting. My granddaddy, Daddy Rob, asked me what happened. I told him that the Lord had saved my soul. I didn't have that heavy burden anymore. I knew if I died right then I would go to Heaven.

Gary Vetetoe
August 1, 1997
McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church
Age 12

I was saved on August 1, 1997 at McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church during the revival. This was my third time to the altar. At last, I was saved by the grace of GOD. Now I can say that when I die, I am going to Heaven. PRAISE THE LORD.

Bobby Towns
Dixon Creek Missionary Baptist Church

I was nine years old at the time when I realized that I was lost and separated from God and I can recall the exact place. It was difficult for me getting saved, I suppose mainly because I had perceived in my mind of what “being saved” would be like and, of course, it wasn’t that way at all. I sought after the Lord for three long years but only truly called me Him one time. On the day of my salvation, my thoughts were that I was not going to leave church until I was saved regardless of how long it took. Again, I tried everything that I thought would possibly work and finally I said “Lord, I now turn it all over to You, take it all, even my life too, just give me that Home in Heaven!” The instant that I said and thought this was when the Lord saved my soul! I am thankful that I have the blessed assurance of my eternal Home in Heaven with my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ when my time comes for me to leave this world.

James Hoyal McClanahan
A Saturday during a Revival
Old McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church
Between 12 ½ and 13 years old

I was attending a Saturday revival with my mother and a friend (a boy about my age that lived in my neighborhood). His name was Doug Stafford. While sitting with my mother and looking toward the mourners' bench and watching the children cry to the Lord to save their souls, my mother asked me if I would like to go to Doug and speak some words of encouragement to him. I did, knowing I was lost myself. When I was crossing the floor between where I was sitting and Doug, I asked the Lord to save my soul and He did. At times when I was cold to my Lord, I had some doubts, but could never get convicted again. What I have is "real."

Lois West Savage
At Home in my Bedroom
Age 12

I was saved at home in my bedroom at the age of 12. I was 10 years of age when I realized I was lost. I started going to the altar during the revivals at Pleasant Hill and Rock Bridge Missionary Baptist Church. It was during the revival at Rock Bridge when I got under deep conviction; I knew then if I were to die my soul was doomed. The revival closed on a Wednesday night. I hardly slept that night. On Thursday morning, my burden had become heavier. I was determined to keep seeking the Lord until I found peace. My Mother, Father, and my older sister prayed with me at different times during the day. It was about 4:00 PM that afternoon I realized I had gone as far as I could go. I looked up and said, "Lord, I surrender my all to you." The Lord spoke sweet peace that very moment and I no longer had a burden. I am so grateful to God that He saw fit to reach down in grace to save me. Jesus paid the penalty for all our sins when He died on the cross. To receive God's forgiveness and eternal life, we need to cast ourselves on His mercy and trust Him to save us. I am thankful I had Christian parents and I shall always be grateful for the memories of my Mother and Father's prayers. I thank the Lord and praise Him for His mercy and saving power and for His wonderful promise. Please remember my husband and me in your prayers.

Teddy Wallin
July 1957
First Baptist Church, Etowah, TN
Age 10

I am happy to share my salvation experience. It was 53 years ago this month....July 1957.....I was ten years old...This Blessed experience was at First Baptist Church in Etowah, Tennessee. Our pastor was Brother H. Calvin Ellis, a wonderful man of GOD. We had had a revival the previous week and I had began to seriously pray...I had the awful feeling of being detached from the church and even at the age of 10, I felt LOST, as if I didn't belong. I wanted to be accepted by the LORD and have a relationship with HIM. That Sunday after the week of revival, Brother Ellis was talking about those that may have a feeling of being LOST. I remember going to the front of the church and as I was walking up I had this emotional feeling of relief. Brother Ellis asked me if I was lost and I said yes. I felt like a heavy burden had been lifted off my heart. I have thought about that experience MANY,MANY times. I continue to pray and thank our FATHER for the shield of salvation...the greatest gift anyone could ever have...Teddy C. Wallin

Linda Petty

1956

Age 10 ½

I am not sure if it was January or February, 1956 that I got saved. I was 10 ½ years old. My mother carried me to church all my life. I had never had a lost feeling before. On this particular Sunday morning, all the Sunday school classes were meeting in the sanctuary. We had a visiting evangelist that was preaching to us. While he was preaching to us, I had a terrible feeling that came over me and I started crying. My Sunday school teacher asked me if I felt like I was lost. At that moment, I bowed my head to ask the Lord to save me and the burden went away instantly. I joined the church and was baptized. I can remember I wanted to tell everyone that I got saved, such zeal. I can remember the paper boy coming to the door a few days later to collect and I told him. This stands out in my mind. I can even remember the dress I had on that Sunday morning that I got saved.

When I was 15 years old, I started dating Harold. I would go to church with him quite a bit. He attended Faith Missionary Baptist Church. Bro. Robert Gregory started Parkwood Missionary Baptist Church, so we started going there some, I loved going to these churches....the singing and preaching. Bro. Gregory married us in 1963. I joined Faith Missionary Baptist Church in 1968 by statement. We became charter members of Mt. Calvary Missionary Baptist when it was organized around 1972. I became a member of McFerrin in 1996, after attending several years.

Tiffani Duke
March 11, 2008
McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church
Age 15

I was saved at the revival on a Tuesday night in March. Bro. Mark Carver was preaching the Word that night when I felt a horrible pain come across me. It felt like someone was trying to pull my heart out. I didn't want to go pray at the altar at first because I was scared people would look at me and feel sorry for me. But just when I needed it the most, Cheryl Kemp came and sat beside me and asked me did I want to go pray. I could hardly get out the word, yes, but some way or another I did. At the altar, I prayed for, I believe 15 minutes, when a feeling came over me I'd never felt before. It was the best feeling in the world and at that moment it felt like everything was going to be okay. I knew I had no reason to cry or worry no more. I stayed at the altar a little while longer just to make sure everything was okay. I kept praying and asking God "was that it" because my salvation experience wasn't like others. I began doubting it while I was there and just being so confused about what had happened. I didn't want to join the church that night or share what had happened because I wasn't sure if I really was saved or not. So I went home and continued to pray. Two months went by and I was so confused. I would think about that night and feel somewhat better but the devil just kept making me doubt it. One night, my sister and I were arguing and we brought up going to Heaven and to hell. I was so jealous because she knew she was going to Heaven and I didn't. She tried to make me feel bad because she was going to Heaven and thought I was going to hell. Well, in defense, I told her I was going to Heaven, too. And as soon as I said that, it felt like bricks were lifted off me. It felt like that night two months earlier at the revival when I know now that God saved me. I told her about that night and how I thought I was saved but just wasn't sure. I called my grandmother and talked with her and told her everything and how I knew I was saved and going to Heaven. The following Sunday, I joined the church at McFerrin and soon after was baptized. From that day on, I've never doubted that night. My life has become so much better and so much brighter since I let my salvation be known.

Lois Garner
1st Sunday in June 1963
Rayon City Missionary Baptist Church
Age 9

I was saved when I was a nine year old girl at Rayon City Missionary Baptist Church during the Sunday Morning Service. It was the first Sunday in June of 1963. I went to the right end side of the mourners' bench when the invitation for sinners was given. I was saved during an altar prayer on my knees.

Deborah Lynn Johnson
June 15, 1965
Rayon City Missionary Baptist Church
Age 8

I was saved on Tuesday night during the revival meeting at Rayon City. After the sermon an invitation for sinners was given and I went to the altar. I was on my knees on the floor in front of the mourners' bench praying for God to save me. My cousin Keran was on my right also seeking the Lord and her mother, Sue Johnson, was on the other side of her. I don't know how long I was there before my prayer broke through, but I do remember the sweet quiet peace that overwhelmingly surrounded me at the moment He saved my soul.

I sat there with my head cushioned against my folded arms as I rested on the altar wondering why I suddenly felt so peaceful. There is a moment of time I cannot account for. I know now that surely I was in the presence of God Himself as the precious blood of Jesus covered my soul and my name was written in the Book of Life. The next thing I remember was people laughing and shouting.

I peeked out from under my arm to see my cousin getting up from the floor. A moment later, I looked up and saw my Aunt Sue with her face just above mine looking down at me. She was the first person I saw with my "new" eyes and the most beautiful woman I had ever seen! With the brightest smile she asked "Well, did the Lord save you too?" That was the moment I realized what had happened. The Lord had saved my soul and the peace was His salvation. I shook my head yes and the rest of the night is a holy blur.

God led me to join the church and my dad, Elder Willard Carthell Johnson, was granted permission to baptize me when the meeting broke. Seven of us were baptized on the same day in Mansker Creek near Hwy. 41 in Goodlettsville, TN. Elder Houston Newberry, and the pastor, baptized the other six.

Delois Ray Powell
September 1946
Union Hill Missionary Baptist Church
Age 11

My Dad, Eld. F. L. Ray was pastor of Union Hill at that time. Eld. N. C. Fuqua was helping in the revival. Dad would come to school and get us out of school to go to the morning service. It was on the second Monday of the revival about midday when I got saved. There was no preaching that day and sinners were getting saved all over the church house. They never even gave an altar call. What a day to remember!

Norma S. Apple
July 1951
Rock Bridge Missionary Baptist Church
Age 13

In 1951 we lived in Gallatin, TN and at revival time at Rock Bridge Church (my Mother's home church) I would stay at an Aunt and Uncle's house in the area to go to church along with a cousin from Louisville. She was 13 months older than I and we were both mourners during the whole revival. I can remember thinking about her and wanting her to be saved and she was saved on the second Monday night. I thought I could not let the revival close and not be saved so I was really praying. The next morning (there were always day services) I was lifted up with that wonderful peace. A wonderful peace that is still there today. I was baptized into Rock Bridge Church by Bro. R. D. Sanders. I am so thankful I was led to McFerrin Church. It has truly been a blessing.

Rachelle Sheumaker

At Home

Age 19

I first knew I was lost when I was 11 years old. I was fine one minute and the next minute I knew without a shadow of a doubt that if I died I would go to hell. I prayed to be saved but did not get the peace I needed. After a few more days of praying off and on, I got discouraged and gave up. I wanted to be saved but I was just so angry with God for not saving me immediately and in the way I wanted, that I kept putting it off. I always said that I didn't want to leave my teen years without being saved. When I turned 19 I knew I couldn't put it off any longer. I was miserable and under deep conviction for about two weeks and then finally on New Year's Eve night I was praying in my room and all of a sudden I felt two electric shock type tingles go through my body. They started at the top of my head and went down through my toes. And I felt better! But I didn't feel like I thought I should feel and later it worried me. There were no bright lights or angels singing and so after awhile I started doubting that I was saved. Finally, a few years later, after weeks of trying to convict myself and being completely miserable, I finally told God that if I was lost He was going to have to show me and if I was saved He was going to have to show me. I totally gave up. And after I gave up, I felt the most amazing thing I have ever felt. He filled me with a peace and joy and happiness that I didn't even know existed! Words cannot even describe it. He let me know without a doubt that I had been saved. He let me know by His spirit touching my spirit in such a way that there could be no doubt that it was Him. That was the most amazing day ever and has given me such peace over the years.

Millie Oldham

March 24, 2010

My Bed

Age 8

I was at the revival that night and Bro. Mark was preaching about Jesus dying on the cross so I could go to Heaven and be with Him. And that just hit me and I thought He died for me and only me. And then I felt lost. Then Bro. Mark asked everybody if they were lost to come to the altar. At first I felt like I shouldn't go up there, then I went over to my mom and started to cry. Then she told me to go to the altar and pray. So I went up and prayed for about 15 minutes and then the revival was over and I still wasn't saved. So I got into our car and prayed the whole way home. And when I got in bed that night and I prayed, I felt that burden go away. Then I got baptized on Easter Sunday.

Baillie Hooten
McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church
Age 8

I was saved at a revival at McFerrin when I was 8 years old. It was a Tuesday night and when they gave the altar call, my friend, autumn, went up and started praying. That was when I knew I was lost. My heart was pounding out of my chest so I told my Mom and we went up to pray. I don't know how long I was up there but after a while I felt like I didn't need to pray anymore and we left. When my mom asked me if I had been saved, I said I didn't know. I felt peace and that I didn't need to pray anymore but I thought that it couldn't have been it. For five years, I suffered through revivals where people would come up to me and ask me if I needed to pray. The hardest time for me was when my 4 best friends came up to me crying and asked if I wanted to pray and I said no. Finally after countless talks with Bro. Johnny and my parents, I knew that God had saved me 5 years earlier. This was also during the revival so I decided that when Bro. Johnny opened the doors of the church, I would go up and join. I thought he would never stop preaching. I was fidgeting in my seat and could barely sit still and Kayla knew something was up. When he finally stopped preaching and gave the altar call, a few people went up so I had to wait even longer. He finally opened the doors of the church and I went up and joined. Breanne had just been saved so we cried together for a good ten minutes and then joined the church. It was a really great feeling because finally me and all the girls I have been friends with since birth (Nancy June, Kayla, Kaycee, Autumn and Breanne) had been saved and joined the church.

Nikki Maynard
Summer Revival
Madison Missionary Baptist Church
Age 12

I was saved when I was 12 years old at Madison Missionary Baptist Church. I think it was around the time of our summer revival. And at this point in my life, I dreaded going to revival. I thought I was lost and knew that people would question me about being lost and would ask me to go to the altar. That Saturday night the pastor of the church talked to me and my cousin about being lost. We were both the same age and everyone was concerned. We both admitted that night that we thought we were lost.

The next morning the pastor mentioned our conversation from the night before and told the congregation about our conversation. After he said it out loud and told everyone, I realized I needed to do something. I could feel the burden and knew at that point I really needed to be saved. So I sat in the pew and just bowed my head and literally gave up. I remember thinking I can't do this anymore, and I would do anything to be saved. The minute I gave up and turned everything over to God, He saved me and the burden was gone.

My parents and grandparents had no idea what was going on at the point. I remember my grandfather was making the "normal route" from the Amen corner to my pew to ask if I was lost. And my mom also started to ask me if I was lost. At that time, I told them both that I had just been saved. My mom said, don't you think you need to go to the altar. I told her no, I was saved right here in the pew. That is the awesome thing about God. He will save you anywhere.

My cousin was also saved that day. We both joined the church the following Sunday and were baptized. When I was younger, I doubted my salvation at times. As a child growing up in a Missionary Baptist Church, you sometimes hear these profound testimonies. I would hear people say they shouted, cried, and saw lights... I didn't have that kind of experience. So at times I would think am I really saved. But then I would feel that peace again and God would remind me that He took that burden away. It is wonderful that God is always with us and will never leave us!

Marilyn Hardee Spicer

Thursday August 27, 1964 during revival
Rocky Grove Missionary Baptist Church, Lebanon, TN,

The year before I was saved I went to the altar because I wanted to be saved and have what everyone seemed so excited about but I didn't realize I was missing the interaction of the Holy Spirit until the next year's revival when the Holy Spirit did actually convict me of my sins and show me where I was headed if I died without receiving God's forgiveness.

Though I was only a ten year old child, the Holy Spirit revealed to me that such things as my disobedience and disrespect I had shown my parents was breaking the law of God and the punishment was the same as all the evil things that I had seen on the news of hardened criminals living their life in prison. This revelation brought me to my knees in prayer.

I prayed for hours promising God I would do this and that better but I never got relief from the burden and fear. Finally I quenched by fists with all my strength and shouted out loud, "Lord, please save me!!" It seemed like I blacked out for just a moment but when I opened my eyes I couldn't pray any more. There was no more fear. On the way home I remember looking up at the stars from the backseat of the car and thinking how beautiful they were. The moment was so peaceful. I later realized that was salvation. God had forgiven me and that was why I didn't have a burden to pray anymore. He changed me. He filled my soul with love and peace.

I don't understand God's love, grace and mercy toward humans but for whatever reason it is the most precious gift He has ever given mankind. Jesus understood it and that is why He was willing to be persecuted and slain by sin to prove God has victory over all things including death.

If you are human, you have sinned at some point in your life. No matter what a kind loving person you are now, your "righteousnesses" (all our good works or goodness) is as filthy rags compared to Christ's perfection. We could never ever get a grade of 100% on the test of obeying every commandment of God - every moment we are awake - every day of our entire life. The Bible says that even our disobedient thoughts have the same punishment as the act itself. Repentance for sin is REQUIRED, along with faith in Jesus Christ, for salvation - which is FORGIVENESS. It is that simple. I was baptized by Bro. William Hall, the Pastor. A night I will never forget. Praise Christ Jesus for His mercy on me - a sinner saved by Grace.

*Isaiah 64:6 But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our
righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf;
and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.
(Notice: righteousness is plural)*

Greg Schroeder
1973
New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church
Age 12

I first realized I was lost when I was 12 at a revival at New Bethel Baptist in 1973. Brother F.L. Ray and Brother H.C. Vanderpool were preaching at the revival. After the preaching had finished they had an altar call, but I stayed put. I could feel the burden and rationalized that I was not that bad of a person and did not need to go to the altar. The burden left later that night.

The next night we stood up to sing during the altar call. The burden was worse and I tried to hide behind my song book while we were singing. I could feel my face turning red and could not stop from trembling. A lady from the church came back to me and asked me if I was lost and I could not hide it. So I proceeded with her up to the altar to pray. I can remember trying to make promises to Jesus if He would save me--like I could strike up a deal for my salvation. While I was praying I could hear others getting up and saying they had been saved. I still continued to try my feeble attempts to convince Him to save me and I was not making any progress. I was determined to do what I could to get myself saved and nothing was working. I finally had to leave it up to Jesus. My last prayer was "Lord there is nothing else I can do". Then the burden was lifted and I knew I was saved.

Seth Hester
June 21, 2010
Faith Missionary Baptist Church
Age 10

I realized I was lost at a youth retreat with Mt. Calvary Missionary Baptist Church. I went and prayed at the altar but did not get saved. After seeking for 3 years, I found the Lord on June 21, 2010. I was praying for about 15 minutes, it felt like my heart skipped a beat and I just felt that peace.

Betty Patterson
August 1944
Plunkett's Creek Missionary Baptist Church
Age 13

I was saved the third day of our revival. I didn't realize I was lost until the preacher started preaching. I ran to the altar and was saved the second time I went to the altar. Thank God for salvation.

Ashton Hester
June 19, 2007
Faith Missionary Baptist Church
Age 13

I was lost for 3 years. I was at Faith Missionary Baptist Church and when we started to sing the invitation song, I knelt at the bench I was sitting on and started praying. I had been praying for a while when the congregation started singing the days of the week song. The preacher helping in the revival came to me and said "You could stand up on it was on a Tuesday if you keep praying. (It was a Tuesday night) So, I started praying with all my heart and begging Him to save me when all of a sudden I felt peace running throughout my body and at the exact same time, the congregation was singing "it was on a Tuesday." I started laughing and the woman in front of me asked me if I had been saved. I stood up as they sang and I knew that I had been saved.

Laura Lynn Smith
April 2002
On the floor in my bedroom
Age 12

My family and I went to church when I was younger, but after we moved in 1997, the church we attended was too far away to go to every Sunday. And soon, we just stopped going. When I was in the fifth grade (2000-2001) my friends started talking more about their churches, and I began to want to go again. Jessica Pyles invited me to McFerrin a few times and then to VBS that summer. During VBS, I realized that I wasn't saved. I really wanted to be, but I didn't have the burden everyone was talking about.

As my sixth grade year came, I went through for a while not feeling any burden and I started to forget about wanting to be saved. Then in April 2002, I was about to go to sleep, but as soon as my eyes closed I felt like I was going to die that night and I was heading straight for hell. So I got out of bed, hit the floor, and started bawling. I kept telling God that I was sorry for everything and I knew that I was a sinner and I didn't deserve to be forgiven, but it was the only thing I wanted. I don't remember exactly what I said or how long I said it. But I do remember that I let everything go and I knew God would take care of me and I trusted Him with every bit of my heart. And soon enough, the burden was lifted and I knew without a doubt that He had saved me and I knew (and I still know) that I'm going to Heaven! So I got back in bed and had the best night of sleep that I ever had.

"I will lie down and sleep in peace, for You alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety." Psalm 4:8

David C Woodard
1984
Union Hill Missionary Baptist Church
Age 8

I, like my brother and sister, was born and raised in a Christian home. My parents always took us to our home church on Sundays and Wednesdays. For most of my childhood that was Union Hill Missionary Baptist in Gallatin, TN. My father and grandfather were both Deacons and my mother was a Sunday School teacher many times during my upbringing. We attended VBS in the summer at Longview and West End churches in Gallatin. We would also visit revival meetings at other churches. My extended family for the most part was involved in churches as well.

I can remember upon many occasions having family prayer in our home. I can remember also hearing my grandfather pray above all the other voices in our church and seeing my father beside him often in the altar praying. I hoped someday to be with them working for the Lord.

When I was eight years old I began to ask questions about being lost. I had heard the preachers talk about it but didn't really understand it. I would ask how it was I would know and what does it feel like? It was explained to me how there would be a time of separation from God when He decided you were accountable for your sins. My mother just told me one thing. She simply said that God would let me know. I did not understand this.

Then one night during our Spring Revival meeting in 1984 things changed. Carthell Johnson was our pastor and Doug Curtis was the assisting preacher. Both had been preaching mightily in the Lord. Many had been seeking. They spoke of God's love for mankind being shown by sending Jesus to die for our sins. They said because of this we could be saved from our sinful state and made Holy. They spoke of a place called hell where men's souls would be forever tormented who did not trust in Christ and that the only means of escape from this damnation and to be made right with God was through the blood of Jesus.

An invitation was given and many made their way to the front to pray and to seek God. The church members were gathered around singing and praying. After some time God made it clear to me that I was lost and without Him. My heart began to pound in my chest. The cries from those on the altar sounded in my mind like those being tormented in flame. I looked up and ran to the front and hit my knees.

There were no doubt many who offered words of encouragement to me but I remember only one. He simply said to me it would be better to be saved and die that night rather than live a life without God and die eternally separated. In that next moment by God's grace I surrendered my very life to Him. The only desire I had, even over living itself, was to be saved. He gloriously saved me that same instant. The fear at once left me, the guilt and heaviness was gone and I rose at once to tell my mother (who was kneeling behind me) I was saved but when telling her I said "I think I am saved". She said that wasn't good enough so I bowed once more but the Lord lifted me up because I had misspoken; I KNEW He had saved me!

Sacha Stewart Woodard

2001

Victory Baptist Church in the Bathroom

Age 21

I was raised in a Christian home. Both of my parents were strong Christians. I've always seen how Christ was the center of their lives. Since an early age, I believed in Jesus. I thought I was saved. I've tried to live like I know I am supposed to, but I've failed so many times. I remember when I was in college; I had a 3 hour drive to and from home almost every weekend. I'd turn off my radio in the car and try to pray. I never really "felt" God. It felt more like I was just talking to myself. I knew what I had wasn't the same as what my parents had, but I always assumed it was because I wasn't doing enough to have that close relationship. When my mom went into the hospital my dad called me. He had flown to Iowa because his dad had just died. He lost his mom in February and his dad in May and literally the day after his father died, my mother was rushed to the ER where they said she wouldn't live through the night. I can't imagine what that was like for my dad. Watching how strong he was and how much he leaned on the Lord just made me realize again that I didn't have that. After David and I moved back to his hometown we started going back to church. We had a hard time finding a church we agreed with in NC. Watching David as he was becoming more active in the church and watching the services, I knew I was missing something. One day during the invitation I asked someone to watch Caty (she was sleeping) and went to the bathroom. I broke down there and cried out to God. I didn't know what was wrong but I knew He wasn't truly in my life. I know that that day I truly repented and Jesus saved my soul. It made me realize that all those years I had believed with my head but had never really surrendered completely. You have to have a change in your heart. I was kind of embarrassed because I'd told everyone for years that I was a Christian. I thought I'd be able to go home and talk to David about it and figure out what to do. When I went back out to the sanctuary though, I felt God telling me I had to join the church. I went up front and when I told everyone, the preacher literally grabbed David and swung him around. They were so excited. I can't believe what I was missing out on all those years. This joy and peace in my heart truly fills me up. I was baptized the next week. I know now that I am truly saved. I have that assurance that I will see my mother again one day in Heaven.

Kathy W. Henderson
December 2, 1961
Madison Mission in Madison, TN
Age 8

I was eight year old when the Lord saved me. Madison Mission was a group of saved people worshiping together before Madison Missionary Baptist Church was organized.

Since I was only eight, like most eight year olds, I was sitting on the front pew coloring while the preacher, Brother William Overton, gave an invitation for sinners to come and pray. Brother Floyd Lambert was the helper at that revival. I remember all the singing, don't remember the song but it touched my heart.

All of a sudden I was coloring and crying, wiping my eyes, thinking this is silly. Why am I crying? Then I realized I was lost. I went to my daddy and told him I was lost. Daddy started crying and told me to go to the mourners' bench.

I didn't make it to the mourners' bench. Somewhere between my daddy and the mourners' bench the Lord saved my soul. I was blessed to have lots of family members there that night, especially my grandparents, Sallie and Arnett Dyer.

On January 1, 1962, Madison Missionary Baptist Church was organized and I joined the church with Brother Vance Overton. On June 19, 1962 Brother William Overton baptized me at Mansker Creek, along with my brother Kerry who was saved May 9, 1962.

Libbie Gregory

1939

Mace's Hill

Age 9

My Travel from Nature to Grace: One night at Mace's Hill Missionary Baptist Church I was 9 years old and I realized I was lost and separated from GOD. I made my way to the altar and I was that night born into GOD's family. When I was saved, redeemed by the blood of Christ, there was one little spot when I died to sin and born again with the spirit, that one little spot you can always tell. I took hold of the Lord and have walked with Him the rest of my life. He has held my hand and He has been my guide, my shield, my friend, and my strength. I try to name all the things He has been and it all comes down to one little sentence. HE HAS BEEN MY EVERYTHING. Without Him I am nothing and with Him I am everything, I want everyone to know that has been my only survivor. Once I took hold of His hand and walked with Him, I did not have to keep anything from Him. I did not have to hide anything because I knew I could not hide anything from Him because He knew everything. It has been the greatest walk once I took hold of His hand and have been walking with Him. That's when I began walking by faith and not by sight.

Jeanne Woodall Cox
August 1976
Hendersonville Missionary Baptist Church
Age 18

My Dad was in the Air Force and we went to church every Sunday, but it was the base chapel, and was pretty generic in its teaching. When I was in the 4th or 5th grade, Mama started talking to me about being saved. One night I prayed that the Lord would save me, and I went in and told Mama and Daddy that I had been saved. I had only been to a Missionary Baptist Church a few times in my life, because we never lived close to one. After we moved back to Tennessee in 1971 we began going to Hendersonville Missionary Baptist Church. I was 13. Soon after we started going people began to ask me if I had been saved. I told them I didn't know because I knew I had asked the Lord to save me, and from what I had comprehended as a child, that was all I needed to do, but what I witnessed from people at Church, I was unclear if I had what they had. After a few years I came to realize that I probably wasn't saved, and felt compelled to go to the altar. I went many, many times, sometimes on my own, sometimes at other people's urging. I cried gallons of tears, and prayed to the best of my ability. After a few years of misery, especially at revival time, I began to get under conviction. The summer of 1976, I was 18 and had just graduated from high school. Our revival was in August. I remember going to the altar several times, and being totally sick at my stomach most of the week. On Sunday, the last day of the revival, I was really, really sick. I wanted to beg my parents to not make me go to Church, but knew that that was not going to happen, because I'm sure they could read conviction all over my face. I felt like I was visibly shaking, but had become adept at hiding it. As soon as the altar call was given, I remember telling God that if He was ever going to save me, it would have to be that night, and in my mind, I saw an old Sunday School picture of Jesus standing at a door. I asked my friend Debbie Faulkner standing beside me to go to the altar with me, and somehow we got up there. I was there several minutes, and then realized all of a sudden I wasn't crying like I usually did, and really hadn't been crying and I couldn't seem to pray. Bro. Robert Gregory was sitting in front of me and asked me if the Lord had saved me, and I told him yes. So somewhere between my seat and the altar I was saved, I realize now that I was at the end of the rope I had made for myself, and finally surrendered to

God and let Him do the saving. I remember my Daddy shouted that night for the first time that I could ever remember, and everybody was so happy. Sis. Carolyn Harper said I had the countenance of an angel, and my mother later told me the look on my face was radiant. I mostly remember being pretty scared of all the commotion I was causing, because I was really a shy person then. About a year later the Lord impressed upon me the need to join the Church. I was sitting at the piano and did not do it. Later I begged the Lord to let me live to the next week so I could join the Church, which I did and was soon baptized. I later moved my membership to Harvest Missionary Baptist Church when it was organized, and then in 2001 I moved my membership to McFerrin. I had always loved going to McFerrin, and loved the people there, because so many of them were family. It wasn't until I came to McFerrin that I had ever heard an experience similar to mine. Mike and I got married at McFerrin, and I later was blessed to hear my husband of 10 years stand up and tell how he was saved at home that afternoon. I am thankful that the Lord has brought us to McFerrin and given us a home to worship and work in. Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

Dee Woodall
Early 1952
Rutland Baptist Church
Age 12

In early 1952, Brother G. A. (Gladdis) Gregory came to pastor Rutland Baptist Church in Mt. Juliet. I don't know how long he had been there, I only remember the Sunday that I first came under conviction. Every word he preached on this particular day seemed to be aimed directly at me. I tried to pretend to be distracted by my little sister, reading the song book and did all the things one does when they feel condemned and are trying to hide it. When Brother Gregory finished his sermon and an invitation song was given, I knew it was for me but I didn't make a move until Brother Gregory stepped out of the pulpit and headed to where I was standing. I remember his words very vividly. He said "little lady, are you lost?" I think I nodded my head and he led me to the front of the church where I sat on a bench with church members gathered around me. I don't think I quite knew what I needed to do although I had heard my father's testimony of being saved so many times. I wasn't able to shut out the people praying around me and my father sitting with his arm around me crying and praying so I left church that day unsaved. However, the burden got heavier as the week progressed. I didn't want to go to church on that Sunday night or on Wednesday night but staying home was not an option for my family. I don't remember how much I prayed that week all I remember is the heaviness I felt in my heart and the dread of knowing that I would have to go to church the next Sunday and that everyone would be looking at me because they knew I was lost. I don't remember much about Brother Gregory's sermon that Sunday but I knew when the invitation was given that I would have to go. I stepped out of my pew and started to the altar but when I got down to where my father was standing at the front of the church, I no longer needed to pray for my salvation. My burden was gone. It took a while for me to understand what had happened. But when I stepped out into the isle, God recognized that I had totally surrendered to His will and He gave me, at twelve years of age, what He knew I would need to carry me through the rest of my life. I praise the Lord for what He did for me on that Sunday and I praise Him for always being faithful.

Angela Ellis
My Friend's House
Age 15

I was 8 years old when I felt separated from God during a visit to a local church. That was the first time I felt afraid. I didn't pray to the Lord at that time because honestly I did not know I needed too. I did not attend church regularly and didn't fully understand what was happening. My God knew that and showed mercy to let me live so that I could.

When I turned 15 I had a very close friend attempt suicide. He and I spoke on the phone several times and I was afraid for him and did not know how I could help him. I was with two very close friends and we all shared the same concern for our mutual friend. Then the same feeling I had when I was younger came back to me. That truth of knowing that I could not help my friend because of my condition was revealed to my heart. I don't remember exactly how it happened other than I knew I needed to pray right there at my friend's house. I remember crying out to God but I don't remember the exact words that I used. All I know is after I finished praying I could not stop smiling. The fear that I had for many years was gone! He also answered my prayer for my friend! God is so good to me and I praise Him for His mercy!

Bobby Gregory
August 1944
Beasley's Bend School Building in
Rural Smith County on Rome Road
Age 13

There were 13 saved that day including my oldest brother. Bro. Calvin Gregory and Bro. F. W. Lambert had borrowed church pews from some other church and put them in the one-room school building where I attended school. In those days, there was no electricity and no air conditioning. We had to use Aladdin kerosene lamps. On the third Sunday in August 1944, they started a two-week revival. At that time, they would have preaching and singing and prayers for about three days before they would have an altar call. During these three days, I realized I was lost. It seemed to me that every word they said was directed to me. On Wednesday of the revival, they had an altar call. I knew I was lost so I went to the altar and probably went another 4 or 5 times before I was saved after listening to the good sermons and all the prayers and all of the old songs, by all of the faithful Christian people. When the Lord reached down and lifted me up, it seemed like I was out in space floating around with beautiful lights all around. When I realized what was going on I was standing up with people shouting everywhere. Even though I did not shout, my burden was gone and I felt peace. The Lord has been so good to me. I have failed Him many times when I would get away from God for long periods of time and I would start doubting my salvation. When I would get in touch with Jesus, He would always send me back to that August night. I was baptized in Dickson Creek by Bro. Calvin Gregory after joining Mace's Hill Missionary Baptist Church in August 1944 and stayed there until August 1960 when I joined New Bethel Missionary Baptist Church. During the years 1945 and 1946 at New Bethel, the Lord saved both of our children. He has been very good to us. I am very thankful that the Lord brought us to McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church. We love the church and the pastor, Bro. Carver and all the members very much.

Leslie Moran
Fairview Memorial Baptist Church
Age 8

I grew up a Missionary Baptist. No questions asked, we were going to church if there was service. I knew at a very young age that the most important thing in life was to be saved.

When I was seven I began to feel troubled. I knew, from the preaching of Bro. Moran, if I wasn't saved and if I died I would go hell. I thought about it all the time. I was scared and very worried. I didn't want to tell anyone because I thought I was too young since my older cousin, Amy, had never said she was lost. Soon, the conviction became so strong that it didn't matter to me.

During every service we were in they would give an altar call. They would play songs like, "Come Unto Me." My heart would start thumping in my chest, as if it could explode. I went to the altar for about a year at different revivals and on Sunday mornings at Fairview Memorial, where my parents were members. I prayed, kind of. I tried to say all the things that those praying around me said. Mostly I repeated, please save me, please save me, God. Sometimes I would bargain and try to think of things I could give up so God would save me.

I remember one Sunday something happened to my Daddy. He was upset after church, very troubled. When we all loaded into the car, he turned to my mom and said, "It's happened, Rhonda." She said "what's happened, Ron, what are you talking about." He wouldn't answer her, he just kept shaking his head. I just knew that God had told him, the world was fixing to end! At that point I became terrified!. I knew I wasn't saved and I was going to die and go to hell all alone. The rest of my family would be in Heaven without me. I couldn't sleep at night, conviction became so strong.

Revival was starting the next week at Fairview Memorial. One Wednesday afternoon, the week before, I was cleaning out my closet and organizing it. Since I have two younger sisters and a brother, they all still took naps around the middle of the day. It was naptime so I camped out in my clean closet. I shut the door and instead of sleeping, I began to pray in the dark. I was troubled again. I don't remember what I prayed but I soon drifted off into a dream. I dreamed I was somewhere by an eerie lake. It was very dark and creepy. I saw a light in the distance. When I woke up, I didn't think about being lost anymore.

Revival started at Fairview. Each night when they gave the altar call, I felt like I should go up and pray but I didn't have the strong burden I'd had in the past. On Wednesday night the altar call came, again I felt like I should kneel and pray, maybe just to figure out if I was saved. Instead, I went to the bathroom so I could be alone. As I shut the door in one of the stalls, I began to think about the past Wednesday when I was praying in my closet, the dream I had and the light I saw. I said Lord, if you haven't saved me, please do now. At that moment I thought back to when I fell asleep in my closet and a peace began to flood my heart. I was so rich of excitement and joy. I felt like if I jumped or leaped, I would fly around the room. I ran out into the service, making my way through the full house, I couldn't stop smiling. It was the most amazing feeling I've ever felt.

I saw my Pappy first; he was standing with my mom and dad. I began to tell them that I was saved. Pappy shouted. I told them I was saved while praying in my closet, the Wednesday before. The more people I told the more excited I became and the joyous thrill filled my entire being even more.

The amazing peace that I felt didn't come until that Wednesday night at Fairview Memorial in the bathroom. So, now that I look back on my experience, I think the salvation came that night, instead of the Wednesday before, in my closet. But, I do wonder why the first thing that I told everyone that I was saved in my closet. It really doesn't matter to me because I know that the experience that night and the feeling that God flooded my soul with was the connection to Jesus that I needed to get to Heaven. I know that I'm saved and God has been with me ever since. It was such a strong feeling, I've been blessed to have never doubted it.

And, as for my Dad knowing the Earth was going to end....he was actually called to preach while singing the "Prettiest Flowers Will Be Blooming" that morning during the Sunday service at Fairview Memorial. He was scared to death too, but for a different reason, of course! My dad has often used my experience while preaching to tell others that they should steal away in their closet and pray, like I did. Whether you pray in a closet or a bathroom stall, the most important thing is to shut the world out and find a place where it can be with just you and God.

Tom Moran
My Friend's House
Age 12

I knew I was lost around the summer I turned 11. Every time the preacher began to talk about hell, it was as if I could feel the heat. When it came time for the altar call, my heart would begin to pound and I knew I needed to go down and pray. I resisted every opportunity I had that whole year. Every time it was brought up in conversation, I would quickly change the subject. I thought if I could keep my mind off it, then the horrible feeling would go away and I would be alright.

The following summer was no different. I knew I was lost but I refused to do anything about it. I found myself trying to spend the night with friends whom I knew their parents wouldn't make us go to church so I wouldn't have to experience that uncomfortable feeling. I did everything I could to run from the Lord's conviction. However, no matter what I did, that feeling always came back and thank God for that.

One Saturday night, I spent the night with my best friend who went to the same church as I did. Lying in bed that night, I began to pray. I remember saying, "Lord, if you don't take this feeling away, I don't think I can ever sit through another church service again." That night in bed, the Lord took that horrible feeling away and gave me sweet peace. Even though I didn't like going in front of the church, I was so excited to tell everyone the next morning.

Rhonda Spurgeon
Drakes' Creek Missionary Baptist Church
Age 8

I had been taken to church all of my life at Drakes' Creek Missionary Baptist Church in Franklin, KY. My mother and father, Sarah and Jerry Moats had always gone to every service, as far as I can remember. My sister, Debbie and I never tried to get out of going to church because it was such a big part of our lives. It's where all or most of our friends were and all of our family attended. We had lots of good spirit-filled services and the house was usually full, especially during the revivals.

I believe it was during a summer revival that I came under conviction at only eight years old. I had been taught exactly what it felt like to be lost and had heard many of the saints' testimonies telling of the change that takes place when we become accountable of our sins or separated from the Lord. It hit me like a heavy brick on my heart. It was a Sunday night service and I was sitting on the corner of the front pew. My grandmother, Beatrice Moyers, always sat on the other end of the second row; and if someone was seeking the Lord, many people were gathered around them at the altar praying, testifying, singing, or shouting. I think she must have been sitting next to me, or at least very close, because I was not afraid to be up there "close to the fire."

When I did feel that awful burden of guilt, fear, and torment, I did not waste any time! I ran to the altar and began praying close to the center of the mourners' ("monors") bench. I have no idea how long I was there or what I said except that I wanted to obey God and get saved as soon as I could, to escape hell. I just remember asking Him to forgive me of my sins and save me. Then, all of a sudden, it was gone! All of the heaviness and pain were gone, and I felt joy, peace, and happiness in my heart! I looked over, almost expecting others to know it happened, and I saw "Grandmother" beside me. I told what happened to me, that God just saved me, and that is all I remember. I know I joined the church and got baptized during that revival with several others; but I do not remember details of that except that Bro. Wesley Briley, who was our pastor, baptized me into the church of Drakes' Creek at the water's edge of "Drakes' Creek" in Franklin, KY.

This is my testimony of salvation by grace through faith. It is not a long, elaborate one of bright lights or shouting, but it is my very own sweet place of peace that God Himself gave me through Jesus Christ His Son. He has

been with me every moment of every day since then; and I want to praise Him for it every day of my life.

Jonathan Hines
June 7, 1987
Old McFerrin Church
Age 10

I was saved on June 7, 1987 at the original church building on McFerrin Ave. I had been taken to church all my life and had heard the gospel from many preachers. Even though I was only 10 years old, I knew what to do when I was lost. I knew that my ONLY part in being saved was to confess to my Lord that I was a sinner, believe that He would save me, and ask Him to save me. I only prayed on the altar for probably an hour before I just didn't feel that burden any more. When I turned around to tell that I had been saved, my brother picked me up and gave me a big bear hug which is a very small detail, but something that I will never forget.

A night or two after that, my best friend, Andrew McClanahan, got saved while I was sitting on the steps to the pulpit above the altar bench. I guess I loved Andrew more than anybody on the earth at that point in time other than my family. Seeing Andrew get saved was the first blessing I received after my own salvation.

A couple of years ago, Heaven took on a much sweeter meaning that it even already was. My son Brady went to be with the Lord at two and a half months old. Although Jesus will be all I need in Heaven, I cannot deny that I look forward to seeing Brady.

I would like to encourage parents with young children to continue to bring your children to church. I believe I am living proof that the hassles of getting young children to church and making them behave are extremely beneficial. Since I was taken to church so much at such an early age, I knew what to do in order to be saved and I thank my parents for bringing me even when I am sure it was tough. Most of all however, my Lord and Master is the One who paid for my sins and He is due all the Honor and Glory.

Joyce Dias
October 1946
Old Dixon Creek Baptist Church
Age 12

I remember very well when God spoke to me and let me know that I was lost. It was the summer when I was twelve years old. I told God, if He would let me live until the revival started at Old Dixon Creek in October that I would go to the altar. When the revival started, the teachers at Cato School always excused the children so they could attend church. The church members would come by the school and get the children and carry them to church. I remember very well that day. I rode to church with Bro. Gillian Porter. He was such a praying man and I always loved to hear him pray. Bro. Phoecian Gribb was the pastor at that time, but I don't remember whether he preached or not. All I know is I had a heavy burden. When they gave the altar call, I just sat there. Mrs. Ercie Gregory came to me and I went to the altar. I prayed and prayed and God saved me that very day. What a peace came into my heart. The following July during the revival at Mace's Hill, I joined the church. Bro. Calvin Gregory baptized me, my Mother, and brother along with about twenty others. In later years, I would visit McFerrin and enjoyed the services. After a while, Jesus led me to join. I have been very happy being a member at McFerrin.

Terry Dwayne Massey

October 21, 1970

At Church

Age 11

My parents and grandparents had taken me to church services at Sycamore Missionary Baptist Church in Macon County, TN since I was a baby. Around the age of nine, I knew I needed to be saved and started going to the altar to pray. But, I did not have a convicting burden. So, I stopped going to the altar until the next revival. During that time of my life, the church only had services on the second Sunday of each month and an altar call was only given during revival services.

I had heard for years if you were not saved you would end up in hell if you died. Death could come before you got home that day or night. That knowledge of me being without God gave me a heavy burden. I began going to the altar at different churches for a couple of years during their revival services. I had given everything up, trusted in the Lord, and begged Him to save me. It didn't work.

When I was eleven years old, I had been going to the altar for three years at this church. On Wednesday night, October 21, 1970, another revival was coming to an end and the church service was starting to be dismissed. I was on the altar praying. Evidently, Satan said in the small voice to stand for dismissal.

As I stood up, it was as if the Holy Spirit told me that I shouldn't be standing yet; so, I sat back down at the altar. I thought, "Lord, this is the end of another revival and I'm still not saved!" I said to the Lord, 'Here I am, I'm yours,' and that was all it took." A very warm, peaceful feeling came over me that gave me chills. My aunt had seen me stand and sit back down, so she came over to me and asked me what had happened as I was still sitting? I told her that I believed that the Lord had just saved me. When I stood up, I felt like I was floating because that heavy burden was gone!

I told the church that I had just been saved! Bro. J.C. Austin gave an invitation for new members and I joined that night. My baptism took place in the creek behind the church during the next church service.

Vickie Lynn Brown Massey

At Home in Bed

Age was between 11 and 12

My testimony begins during my childhood in Lafayette, Tennessee (Macon County). As a child, I remember being in a church service with my immediate family on only one occasion. It was during a revival service on a hot, summer evening and all the wooden pews were filled to capacity in the small country church. There didn't appear to be any standing room either as people were standing elbow to elbow alongside the rear pews all the way back to the wall on both sides of the building. Those standing in the rear of the church building were even more committed to attending this service since they were standing even closer than elbow to elbow. It was very, very hot during this service since there wasn't any air conditioning at that time in the church building. My age was probably 4-5 years then. I don't remember anything else about church services until I was around 12 years old.

During that time in my life, my father's family attended a church in Jackson County called Pleasant Valley Missionary Baptist. It, too, was a small white wooden church nestled under lots of trees with a creek running alongside the flat yard in the front of the church. My sister and I, along with our cousins, were taken to this church during the revival services by our grandfather or one of our aunts from my dad's side of my family. I didn't realize it back then; but, now I see how my Heavenly Father made sure that I heard the Gospel even when the odds were stacked against me being in a church.

To illustrate this point more clearly, I grew up on Union Camp Road where my great-grandfather had owned hundreds of acres of farm land. My grandfather and my great-uncle inherited the farm. Once my dad and his siblings became of legal age, they were each given one acre of land. So, a few of the children, including my dad, built a house on his or her acre and began his or her family. My grandfather's generosity was admirable as he clearly wanted to help his children with a land gift. Unfortunately, as worldly issues creep into families and disputes divide relationships, I grew up not knowing very much about my grandparents at all when they lived less than 1/10 of mile from me. It was because of the extended family disputes that I never knew what it was like as a child to attend church every Sunday with my extended family. My parents didn't take my sister and me to church either. So, I grew through the childhood years without being taught

anything from God's Word. I had never seen my parents pray nor was I taught to pray.

As I grew to around age 11 or 12, my cousin would invite me to go to church with her. Even though our parents didn't speak to each other, we were able to be friends and spent lots of time together. So, our grandfather or one of our aunts would gather up the cousins and take us to Pleasant Valley Missionary Baptist Church. My grandfather had an early sixties model, light blue Chevy truck. So, he would have about four of us grandchildren in the truck with him as we drove along to church. He would sing "Amazing Grace" as he drove us. I don't think he was aware that I was listening to him sing. Today, that song still brings back the memories of him singing as he drove us to church.

The services of the revival were difficult for me. Since I was there without either parent, whom had never spoken to me about the Lord, I felt very intimidated. I did listen to the sermons though. The revival sermons were of the need for Jesus and the avoidance of hell. The ladies of the church would be shouting and other children around my age would be at the altar praying. Some of the ladies would come over to me and ask if I was lost. I would always tell them "no" and wish they would go away and not bring attention to me. All the while, I was trying to control my emotions and not let them see me cry.

We went to the services day and night. Each time I remember thinking that I just wanted to go home. But, I don't remember "not wanting" to go back for the next service. Those ladies were being used by the LORD to lead me to HIM. They would say to me, "Honey, are you lost?" I would reply, "No." But, they didn't give up. They continued to tell me what I needed to know to be saved. They told me that I had to trust in the Lord totally. I distinctly remember one lady telling me that I had to be willing to give up everything and all the important people in my life and she went through the list of important people verbally. She said, "You have to give up mama and daddy, sister, grandma and grandpa and trust in the Lord and HE will save you. I listened as she spoke. As she or any other person walked away, I felt a sense of relief for the moment because their focus wasn't on me any longer. But, what they said to me stuck with me. Then during those services, my cousins started to be saved and I knew I had to find the Lord too. I wanted to go to Heaven too!

So, one night, when we got home from the revival the burden was tremendous on me. My dad wasn't home that evening at that time, but my mother and my sister and I had already gone to bed. I remember thinking to myself, "I'll go talk to Mama." So, I went into her bedroom and asked her,

“What does it mean to be lost?” I guess she was already asleep or very tired, so she told me to just go back to bed. So, I did. But, I didn’t go to sleep then. I couldn’t. I started praying and remembering what the ladies at the church had told me that would be necessary to be saved. That was to be honestly willing to give up all that was important to me and trust HIM totally. I knew I wanted HIM to save me with all my heart; so, I started thinking of the people that I would have to give up for Him to save me. I remember thinking of the most important people in my life, one at a time. As I was able to say to myself and visualize that I could leave my family behind; grandparents, sister, dad and then mom, one by one, each one being a step closer to God. Then, I remember as I was visualizing and thinking that I would give up my mom to be saved and praying for the Lord, to save me, I WAS SAVED! I remember seeing myself walking toward Jesus with HIS outstretched arms as I walked toward HIM. I had a feeling of total peace; just like a hand from Heaven above had touched me and then I very easily went to sleep.

Upon awakening the next morning, I thought of the night before and my experience. But, I didn’t tell anyone. I didn’t feel like anyone really wanted to know. Even though my aunts and grandfather took us all to church, I never felt close enough to them to share my experience. They didn’t ask me either. My parents never asked me anything about attending those services. So, I kept it to myself, all those years until I was 36 years old. Not a single person asked me about my soul’s condition except for my husband, Dwayne.

Then, one day, Dwayne’s cousin, Dwight, told him about McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church. We went for a service on Easter Sunday and met Bro. Johnny Carver for the first time. We felt very welcomed as visitors in the church. I especially enjoyed hearing Bro. Johnny preach his message. I had been yearning for “this church” all along. I didn’t know that McFerrin existed; but, I knew that God had gotten me here for a reason. Still, we didn’t go back for another year. And then, when Bro. Johnny greeted us, he said something that I will never forget. He said he was glad we had come to visit again. I couldn’t believe he remembered me. He even told me where we sat when we were there the last time. Bro. Johnny didn’t know it; but, his remembrance of where we sat one year earlier meant a lot to me because I was not accustomed to any one in a church even knowing I existed.

At that time, Bro. Johnny spent time in the book of Proverbs on Sunday mornings and asked the congregation to read a chapter a day as a daily living guide. As I began doing just that, I was so happy to learn that the

TRUTH that I felt in my heart was in print for daily living. I so vividly remember thinking, "This is what I have been looking for." I had spent years of my life watching and listening to people as I wondered why their views within this world were not like mine. As it turns out, my views were like the words written in Proverbs and I wasn't "so wrong" after all.

My Heavenly Father was confirming that I did have the Holy Spirit within me from my childhood when I trusted HIM that night in my bed, despite all the loneliness I had known because most everyone that I had in my circle was very worldly. The Holy Spirit had been guiding me and He had gotten me to McFerrin where I would continue to learn more about my Savior, Jesus. John 8:47a: "He who is of God hears God's words." God doesn't forget HIS children; nor does HE leave them behind. I joined McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church on July 29, 2001 and was baptized by Bro. Johnny Carver during the evening service.

Amen

Whitney Deigh Massey
Tuesday, July 27, 2004
McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church
Age 11

My parents had taken me to church most of my life. Then in year 2000, we started going to McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church on a regular basis. I was seven years old at that time and didn't really know what it meant to be lost or saved.

We continued going to McFerrin every Sunday we were able to go. My sister, Morgan, had been lost and was saved in 2001. When she was lost I heard so many people tell her that when she gets saved she will be able to go to Heaven, and if she ever died without salvation she would spend eternity in hell.

After hearing those individuals speak I decided I needed to start listening and find out how to get saved. I listened for about two years and found out how to be saved. When we went to church I always knew I needed to be saved, but I never had a burden. My parents asked me a lot during or after church if I ever had a burden, and I replied with a simple, "No."

During revival of 2004 my Dad and I had gone to church on Monday night, but my mom and sister were unable to attend church service that night. While Brother Johnny was preaching I knew I was under conviction, but I didn't want to go to the altar. I prayed a few times about it that night but I still felt the burden.

The following night, Tuesday, we went to church and my mom and sister were able to come. During the whole church service I was burdened and knew I had to go to the altar. When Brother Johnny asked for the lost to come to the altar I told my parents I wanted to go. They said go ahead and were right behind me the whole way. I prayed for 45 minutes to an hour. I remember I had stopped praying for a few minutes and thought to myself, was I saved? I didn't think I had been saved so I told my parents and Brother Johnny that I was tired and ready to go home. Brother Johnny told me to continue praying throughout the night because the Lord would save me wherever I was, if I would put my faith in Him.

That night I prayed to God and asked Him to let me know where I stood with Him. I prayed for a while and drifted off to sleep. I woke up the next morning feeling like I had gone to sleep one person and awakened as another; but, I just figured I felt better after I had gotten some sleep. During the rest of revival I never went back to the altar because I didn't feel a

burden anymore. My parents continued asking me if I wanted to go back, but I said no.

I doubted my salvation for a year but continued praying about it. The next year came and it was time for revival again. We went Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday night, and I never had a burden anymore. I knew I had to have been saved because the way Brother Johnny was preaching there was absolutely no way I could have felt okay. I went home on Tuesday night and prayed that God would help me to understand if I had a true salvation.

Finally Wednesday morning I got up and started talking to my mom about salvation. I told her what I had felt the previous year during revival but didn't know where I stood. I also told her I never had a burden to pray any longer, and she said, "Dad and I haven't had a burden for you any longer either." I thought about that for a couple hours that day. I finally asked God that afternoon to show me something as confirmation to my salvation. It wasn't five minutes later that God answered my prayer. I saw a very important number to my family go across the television screen on CNBC's stock ticker. I thought right then, "I've been saved and God has confirmed it for me." The number is 847 and we have come to understand that it references John 8:47a, "He who is of God hears God's words."

I told my mom what had happened and called my dad at work. He said that was great and suggested that we go to church early to tell Brother Johnny about my experience. I told Brother Johnny that night what had happened and he said, "That is wonderful and I will be sure to give you a chance to join the church tonight."

I joined the church that night, July 25, 2005, as God has commanded us to do. The following Sunday, July 31, 2005, I was baptized.

Today, I have absolutely no doubt that I was saved on Tuesday, July 27, 2004. Satan was able to keep me from joining the church for one year but our wonderful Savior showed me the way and answered all of my prayers.

Aldene Eldridge
In the desert near my home
Age 10

Thinking about my salvation experience has brought back some wonderful and some sad memories of my earlier years. There is a short history that I need to express before I get to my salvation story because I want everyone to understand how deep my belief and salvation story run.

My father was a military man and also a preacher. Father served in WWII, Korea and we also got to live all over the states from Alaska to Louisiana as a family. When I was almost eight years old he was sent to Germany. We were preparing to join my father in Germany, but, before we were able to do so, his unit went out on maneuvers and my father was critically injured. A machine gun swung around, and struck my father crushing in the front of his skull. My father came as close to the brink of death as any man can get and still return. He spent close to 18 months in the hospital. The doctors put a metal plate in his head to replace part of the front of his skull. We went to see him when the army doctors finally sent him to the military hospital in San Antonio. When he came walking down the hall towards us, I hid behind my mother. My father had lost so much weight, one side of his face drooped and he didn't look like himself. My mother had told me on the trip there that dad would be coming home soon, start taking care of us and we would be living as a family again. I remember thinking "how can he take care of us when he can hardly walk". That was when my great childhood fear started and I didn't trust any adult to take care of me anymore.

My father came home shortly after our visit to San Antonio and went back to being an assistant pastor as he had done before he went to Germany. I helped my mother with all the household chores and responsibilities of a family because my father would have massive headaches from his injury and not even know who he was. My wonderful loving God-believing father had come back to us a very different man. My mother and father both preached duty, duty, duty and honor all that time training us in the way that we should walk. By the time I was 10, I had most of the responsibility of the household because both of my parents were working. That was just the way life was and there was no need to grumble.

My parents were always telling me "you have to be strong and help others. I need to be able to depend on you." That was also when the

church ladies started working on me. I heard every Sunday, "You know Aldene, you know right from wrong so you are of the age of accountability now." "Don't you want to be saved?" "If you want to talk about Jesus, all you have to do is find one of us." I don't remember a Sunday or Wednesday service going by that I didn't hear from at least one of these ladies and the "I'm praying for your soul". I already knew how very far away from God I was. I also knew that had He allowed my death that I would have been separated from Him for all eternity. I clearly understood what the wrath of God would entail. Those thoughts kept me awake often and trembling in my bed. Yet, still, I didn't want to admit that I wasn't good enough or that I needed anyone or anything. This went on for well over a year. I was angry and sad knowing that I didn't belong to God anymore.

One Sunday afternoon I had gone out into the desert a short distance from the house after we got home from church. It was mid-spring and the desert had great stark beauty at that time. The church ladies had been working on me especially hard that day so I had gone out to find a little peace by being alone. I started watching a group of ants working on their little hill. I was watching them intently as they carried little grains of sand and rebuilt their little hill where the wind had taken away part of their hill. Deep inside of me I heard that still small Voice, "If I can take care of these ants, why would I not be able to take care of you? I take care of the birds in the sky and the beasts of the field, why would I not take care of you? The world turns and each day follows another, does it not?" I remember getting very, very angry and yelling out loud, "Can't I have even a little peace out here in the desert? Besides I know that I'm not good enough!" That wonderful Voice said, "You don't have to be good enough. It's a gift already freely given. A price already paid. All you have to do is accept it." What a moment! I finally accepted that Christ Jesus had died for me and I surrendered then. The peace that came to my soul was and still remains beyond human words. I ran all the way home yelling, "I get it! I get it! I've got it! I've got it!" That blessed day I knew that I belonged to our Lord Jesus Christ and through Him to the Father. My parents called the pastor and we all celebrated!

That Sunday evening, our pastor preached a sermon on how the Lord will never forsake us; God's reassurance for a new believer.

I heap blessings on those little old church ladies, on my parents and other Christians for teaching the right way to me and for being persistent and never giving up on me. Also, for showing me salvation's path. I sing in their honor and to the glory and honor of God. I've always known the duty and honor that you have to have in relationships to make them work. I

thank God and praise His Holy Name for sending Joe and I to McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church because I've learned much more about the great love of God and about companionship with other Christian souls here.

Joe Eldridge

At Home

Age 11

To the person (or persons) reading this - may God bless you and yours. My salvation story starts almost as far back as I can remember. My dad and mother, both Baptists, insisted that I go to church. At an early age of four or five, I believe was the first time I remember going to church without my parents. (I think they wanted some time to themselves). I was riding the church bus on the way back home when one of the youth ministers noticed little fingers holding on to the seat in the back of the bus. He came back to where I was sitting and since I was the last child on the bus he asked, "Where do you live son?" Just as he had asked the question, this little voice and hand pointing right there, we passed by my parents home. Needless to say they turned the bus around and got me home. Even at this early age because my parents instilled a knowledge that God loves you, I knew I was going to be alright. And I was. Just for the record my parents are still married 41 years later and still counting (2010).

I was eleven. My parents and I went to a Free Will Baptist Church. Like my wife, Aldene, I have seen that the evil of the world has a way of trying to corrupt the innocent. All my friends went to this church because it was the thing to do at the time. But not for me, I was looking for something else, something higher, and something far more than just following the crowd. Unknown to me and the majority of the other children, one of the youth ministers was molesting certain kids in his care. When I heard this it made me mad and very upset. The youth minister was expelled from the church, but the damage was done.

While an eleven year old boy, I was trying to figure out what was going on. My world had suddenly become very scary. One day when I was reading the Bible, I started crying for no reason, or so I thought at the time. Thinking of these children I was overcome with grief and fear. I started praying to God for forgiveness of my sins. All of a sudden I stopped crying, I had this sudden peace within my heart. By the time I was done praying, there was no more pain, no more sorrow, and no more trying to figure out what was wrong with the youth minister or anyone else. I knew that I was safe in my salvation. I went and told my dad what had happened. We both praised God.

Since then I've been married twice. The first time I was married I call "the good times". Twelve years later I buried my first wife; a time that I refer to as "the bad times". Through it all, the one constant thing in life is

that God is always there. If we would just take time to talk to Him, things would be a little bit easier to deal with.

Three years after my first wife passed away I had made my mind up that I would never get married again, or that it would take a woman sent from God for me to marry again. I met Aldene - now we have "the best of times". She is a true blessing to me and everyone she talks to or knows. I thank God for putting her in my life. She only strengthens my walk with God.

Keran Card
June 15, 1965 (Tuesday)
Rayon City Missionary Baptist Church
Age 7

It was Tuesday June 15, 1965 of Rayon City Missionary Baptist Church's revival. It was hot. Our church building wasn't air conditioned and our fans were the hand held variety: flimsy cardboard cutouts with a picture of a steepled church building on the front and a funeral home advertisement printed on the back – stapled to a wooden handle.

As a seven year old, I had never thought about the condition of my soul. Although I was taken to Sunday School and church from the time I was 3 weeks old, I couldn't have recounted a single lesson or sermon. However, God had written on my heart the lessons I couldn't recall.

I must have played hard that day because I fell asleep during the service. I was on the second (and back) pew of what we then called the "Amen Corner" on the left side of the church. Daddy always sat on the front pew because he led singing and that pew was closest to the piano.

When I fell asleep, I was as safe and unconcerned as any child could have been. When I woke up, I was as lost and condemned as the vilest sinner that ever lived. Not only was I lost, I was convicted. I didn't have to wonder what was wrong, I knew.

There were already people on the altar and the congregation was gathered there singing. I don't remember working my way through to the altar, but when I got there, six other children were already seeking God with just enough room for one more – me.

I knelt there in the center of the altar and started pouring my heart out to God, begging for His salvation. I promised Him things, I told Him He could kill me (I was 7) right after I told Mama and Daddy I was saved – if He would just save me. I was miserable. It was so hot, I was certain I was about to fall into the fires of hell. None of my promises or bargains was what God wanted. In His tender mercy, He graced me with the faith to ask Him for salvation, believing that He would save me. When He granted me that moment of ultimate faith, His peace flooded my soul. The fire of conviction and condemnation was quenched and He placed in me a fire of love for Him. I was as certain that He had saved me as I had been that I was lost.

Immediately after I felt His peace and love, I moved my head off of the altar and into the lap of my mother and said, "Mama, I got saved!"

For a long time, I was hesitant to tell my full experience. I was afraid, because of my young age, that people would think I'd only had a bad dream and woke up scared, mistaking that for conviction. It took maturity and God's intervention to make me realize that this is the experience He gave me and that I should cherish and be thankful for every facet of it – and I am.

Michael Cox
July 27, 2001
At Home

I first started going to church with Jeanne at Harvest Missionary Baptist Church in 1991. Since I wasn't raised in church, I didn't know what it meant to be lost or saved. The first time that I went to the altar was at the June revival at Harvest that year. The first night I prayed, nothing happened. The next night, I had a heavy burden, I was praying at the altar for what seemed for hours, but Jeanne said it was about an hour, but still nothing happened. The rest of the revival I did not go back to the altar, either I was ignoring the burden or it wasn't there. Over the next few years, I only went back to the altar a very few times but never with a burden. We started coming to McFerrin in the year 2000, going to revivals but still nothing until the July revival in 2001. On the Thursday night service, it was either Bro. Massey or Bro. Johnny that said if you knew you weren't saved, just come up and say one prayer, then if you wanted, you could go back and sit down. I went up to the altar, said my prayer and nothing, so I sat down. The next morning, I woke up, but just didn't feel right. As the day went on, the burden grew stronger and stronger until I had to pray. I went into my bedroom, fell on my knees and prayed. I prayed and prayed but still the burden grew stronger, until finally I told the Lord that if He didn't save me now, I might not ever get saved, and the burden was gone. I thought, is that it, no bells, no bright lights, just peace. I tried to pray some more, but there was no burden, and I knew I was saved. I called Jeanne at work, told my in-laws that afternoon, and couldn't wait to get to church that night to tell everyone. I now know that I was trying to think my way into Heaven, but all it took was total surrender, and the Lord will gladly save you.

Morgan Leigh Massey

January 2, 2002

At Home in Bed

During Vacation Bible School of 2001 at McFerrin, I realized I was lost while singing a song with my VBS class (directed by Sis. Katie). Revival was the next week and I had a heavy burden on my heart; there was no way to escape the feelings I had. Nothing could take my mind off of the situation. I began praying for salvation during VBS and continued; I couldn't understand why I wasn't being "saved". After all, I had prayed and prayed, but nothing.

A few days after September 11, 2001, I remember coming inside from playing one night and sat down on the couch with my dad to watch a baseball game. When it was over, he turned off the TV and started talking about just how important it was to be saved because in a split second, just like on 9/11, our lives can be changed forever and if we aren't saved, then it's too late. That talk really stuck with me.

On January 2, 2002, I was lying in my bed that night, praying to God—asking Him to watch over my family. As I was praying, the word 'Believe' flashed across my mind as if it was a neon sign. Just as quickly as the word came to me, I put all of my faith and trust in the Lord. All of a sudden, the burden was lifted and this wonderful sense of peace came over my soul. What an amazing feeling!

From January 2, I wanted to make sure that what I felt was truly "it" and the Holy Spirit was truly reigning in my soul. During revival, July 29, 2002, one year later from the time I realized I was lost; I heard the testimonies of others that night and knew that what I had felt on that January night was a heart-felt salvation! I turned to my mom and told her, "I am going to Heaven!"

The next night of revival, July 30, 2002, I gave my testimony in front of the congregation and was baptized the next Sunday, August 4, 2002. It was all truly an experience of a lifetime!

Lou E. Russell

In a building near my school

Age 10

I was saved when I was 10 years old. We were living within walking distance of Rocky Mound Missionary Baptist Church. Brother W.T. Russell was the pastor. They had a big revival that year, but I never went to the altar.

Many of my friends got saved in that revival. One day we went to a building at school where they kept wood to heat the school. We were having church, when one of my friends that had gotten saved in the revival was singing "Give Me That Old Time Religion", that's when I got saved!

Later on I joined Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church where my Mother and Father and many of my relatives were members. I was baptized by Bro. Calvin Gregory on a cold Sunday in October.

Reice Ann Towns
April 1985
My Grandmother's House
Greeneville, TN
Age 13

One weekend in mid to late April 1985, my parents and I went to Greeneville, TN to spend the weekend with my grandmother. I do not remember why, but my grandmother let me sleep in her bedroom, and she slept on the couch.

Saturday night I had a terrible nightmare about hell. The nightmare awakened me, and I knew I was lost. I immediately began to pray, and after praying for about ten to fifteen minutes, I felt like a dead spirit had been pulled out of my body. Immediately Satan came on the scene telling me, "No, that wasn't it," so I thought that maybe someone had kicked me. That was a silly thought though since no one was in the bed with me. I tried praying some more, but the burden was gone. I went back to sleep with a smile on my face and a peaceful feeling in my heart.

Like many other people, I have doubted my salvation, but when I prayed about it, God always took me back to that same time and place. I know what I received that night at my grandmother's house was genuine salvation.

Amy Brothers
1981
At Home in my Bed
Age 12

"I love the LORD, for he heard my voice, he heard my cry for mercy. Because he turned his ear to me, I will call on him as long as I live. The cords of death entangled me, the anguish of the grave came upon me; I was overcome by trouble and sorrow. Then I called on the name of the LORD; "O LORD, save me!" The LORD is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion. The LORD protects the simple-hearted; when I was in great need, he saved me...Praise the LORD." Psalm 116:1-6, 19b

God has been so merciful and gracious toward me that I cannot begin to write down all of the things He has done and continues to do in my life. As a child, He provided for me a family and a church who taught me about His Son, Jesus Christ. I always knew that Jesus was God's Son and that He died upon the cross to pay for my sins. I knew that He loved me and wanted me to be in Heaven with Him one day. These things I knew in my head from childhood but the Holy Spirit did the work of teaching them to my heart. From around age seven onward, I began to understand that I would have to respond to God in some way if I were to be saved. I remember praying from time to time that I wanted to be saved, but it was more like wishing instead of really praying. When I was twelve years old, I was at church one night and I felt so strongly the pull of the Holy Spirit, I knew I did not want to come back there again unless I had worked out this problem with God. On the way home I remember thinking, "I wish everyone would just be quiet and let me get home so I can pray!" After my family was in bed, I began to pray in earnest. I told God all of the things I could think of to tell him, that I loved Him, that I knew Jesus died for me, and that I needed Him. I asked Him to save me, to forgive me for my sins, to let me go to Heaven when I died. I got on my knees and prayed some more. I don't know how long this went on, but I remember running out of things to say. I got back into bed and put my face in the pillow. I felt very hopeless, like I had done everything I could do. In my despair, I said something like, "God, if you won't help me, then no one can help me." That was the moment when everything changed. I felt no more fear. I couldn't make myself be afraid anymore, because there was no more condemnation. That was the beginning of my relationship with God. He has been so longsuffering toward me and is still teaching me daily about Himself. I learned to trust God with my eternal life the night He saved me, but I have

been learning how to trust Him with my daily life on an ongoing basis ever since. His Word is so powerful. Every period of positive change in my life, every part of the process of sanctification seems to be preceded by God making certain parts of His Word real to me. The first time I really trusted Him with some decisions about my life as an adult, He taught me with these verses: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart." There are so many more examples, I cannot list them all, but I do want to praise Him for His boundless mercy and grace!

Kayla Heins
Fall
Rushings Creek Missionary Baptist Church
Age 16

I was saved when I was 16 years old at a fall revival at Rushings Creek Missionary Baptist Church. I had been to the altar before that night, but the conviction didn't leave, and I still had a need to seek the Lord for salvation. The last time I was at the altar, my experience was different. I had been praying at the altar for some time and then in an instant, the conviction left, a peace and stillness came within, and I didn't need to pray anymore. I knew something had happened. Right after that occurred, the devil started making me confused. I remember questioning if that experience was it, as I was expecting to feel something more than just a burden lifted and not needing to pray anymore. However, I knew something happened. I left the altar that night confused, and I went many years doubting if I had been saved. Even with my doubt, I could not deny that I loved the Lord and wanted to serve Him and obey Him. I enjoyed talking with others about Him. Also, no matter how much I tried, I couldn't get myself to the place where I could seek the Lord for salvation again. Every time I prayed about my confusion, my mind kept going back to the last time at the altar. I could not get that experience out of my mind. No matter how much the devil tried to confuse me, the devil could not take away that time at the altar, and I am very thankful for that. When I started attending McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church, I was still struggling with my doubt. Since I grew up in a small church, I had never known anyone to struggle with doubt. At McFerrin, I learned of people who had dealt with similar struggles, and I got to hear how the Lord had proved faithful in bringing them clarity. During McFerrin's March 2010 revival, I got to the point where I didn't want to carry the burden of doubt anymore. It was then that I realized that I needed to stop focusing on reasons why my salvation experience wasn't what I had expected and start accepting what the Lord had to tell me, as I should not try to add anything to that experience. I started praying that if the Lord was satisfied with that last time at the altar, that I would be satisfied too. I decided to persistently pray to the Lord and not stop until He answered. The Lord gave me a peace with my salvation experience, and He gave me a desire to join McFerrin. I knew that joining McFerrin was the right way for me to be obedient to the Lord and to tell the devil that he couldn't confuse me anymore. Andy and I joined McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church on

Sunday morning, April 18th 2010. We were baptized on Sunday morning,
May 16th 2010.

Andy Heins
At Home in my Bedroom
Age 11

I was saved when I was 11 years old. While sitting in church service one morning, I felt convicted and knew I needed to seek the Lord for salvation, but I didn't go before the church to pray. On the way home from church, I told my parents that I felt that I was lost, and they told me that salvation was something that I had to work out with God. They could not do it for me. That afternoon when I got home from church, I went up to my bedroom and started seeking the Lord. I was saved that afternoon. I told my parents what had happened, and they took me back to the church so that I could tell the pastor that I got saved. I joined the church and got baptized on the following Sunday.

Wilson Dillard

I was saved one hot August night in a "Protractive" Meeting on the altar in a Methodist Church. I really have never been able to find the words that would tell all of what Jesus did for me that night. That was about 70 years ago and it's so plain in my heart today. It is so unspeakable but so plain to me.

I will never be able to thank the Lord enough for His love to me.

Mary Small
Mace's Hill Missionary Baptist Church
Age 71/2

I was saved at Mace's Hill Missionary Baptist Church when I was 7 1/2 years old. We had always been taught to go to the altar as soon as we felt we were accountable. I was saved soon after I went to the altar the first time.

I have been a child of God practically all of my life and He has been so good to me. Thank you, Lord.

I was baptized into Mace's Hill Church by Bro. Calvin Gregory at that time. I have been a member of McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church since 1962.

Todd Inman
January 1990
Home
Age 28

I started attending McFerrin with my wife, Angie, before we were married in 1989. It reminded me so much of the church I had gone to as a boy but I had no idea of what salvation was truly about until I heard the true gospel preached here. When I did realize I was lost, it was the worst feeling I had ever experienced. The burden of sin was so great that I put myself in the floor and prayed as hard as I could. Then God picked me up with sweet peace in my heart. I didn't shout but I was lifted up spiritually and rejoiced in my heart. God truly has blessed me ever since that night and I know how God gives His people the strength to honor and serve Him every day.

Bob Schoenbachler

In Church

I always knew something was missing in my life. I just didn't know what. Then I met my wife Norma and my life began to change. She was always faithful to her church and I would go with her occasionally. I just couldn't believe all the praying. The first time I heard someone shout, I was in shock. I had never heard or seen anything like that. A revival started and I went; and, man, did that minister make me feel uncomfortable. He was so intense and really working hard to get the message to everyone. Everything he preached about seemed to be about me. I couldn't believe it--why me--preach to someone else. He finally finished and I was so relieved it would soon be over. I just didn't know my life was about to change.

The altar call was made and I sure wondered what that was about. Then Bro. Doyle who had been preaching walked down the aisle toward me. He stopped, looked at me and said young man how about you, are you ready? I said I think so. He said you had to know. Do you have a place and time? I had respected him from the first time I met him. He was such a godly and humble man. When he asked me to go to the altar for prayer, I thought I was going to pray for him. When I knelt down, I knew that wasn't the case. I didn't even know how to pray, especially pray for him. After that prayer, I went back to my seat. I didn't sleep much that night. I vowed I'd never go back to that church. I didn't get ready for church the next morning. My mother-in-law (who I loved dearly) said Bob, why aren't you dressed for church. At that, I got ready. On the way to church, I told them don't expect me to ever go to that altar again. Bro. Doyle preached again, the same way. When he was finished I couldn't wait to walk down that aisle to the altar. I still didn't know how to pray. When I knelt, this godly lady knelt beside me and told me to tell the Lord I loved Him and beg Him to save my soul. I began to call on Him and begged Him to save me. I said, "Please God save me, I'm willing for You to take me now". In a few seconds, the burden was gone. The choir began to sing, "Take My Hand Precious Lord." I have never been happier than I was at that time. I had been raised of a different faith. I guess God wanted me to know for sure that something wonderful had really happened to me so when I looked out over the crowd; it looked like they were all angels. I have never doubted my salvation. I have enjoyed every minute of it. I know

what happened to me that Sunday and it will never leave me. Thank God for the many blessings He has bestowed upon me.

Norma Schoenbachler

Age 13

I was saved when I was 13 years old. I had been lost for some time but didn't want anyone to know. I was so troubled I thought I was going to die because my heart was beating so fast. Then it seemed like I was going to smother to death. Everyone kept asking me to go to the altar to pray. I just wouldn't go. Mr. Morris, a deacon in our church, came and talked to me all the time. A revival started at my home church, Pleasant Union Baptist Church in Brownsville, KY. The altar call was made and, of course, here came Mr. Morris. My sister who was sitting beside me just gave me a little nudge and I went up for prayer. I was saved the next day. I was praying for God to save me and forgive me for my sins. My mother and Aunt Molly were praying with me. I felt like standing up and when I did, what a blessing I received. I was the happiest person in the world. A moment in time I can never explain, I felt only complete happiness. Every time I think of that moment in time, I just feel like I'm floating around for a little while. What a simple thing I had to do for my salvation, just stand up for God. That time has never faded after all these years. I received such a blessing that day, that it is hard for me to understand why people don't know if they have been saved. That day, my cup runneth over.

Tim Gregory
Fall 1964
Meadorville Missionary Baptist Church
Age 8

I had been under conviction for several months and knew I was lost and without God. I had attended several revivals; East Main Missionary Baptist Church, Dixon Creek Missionary Baptist Church, and Mace's Hill Missionary Baptist Church. If my parents were not able to attend every night, our neighbor, Athlelene Oettel, would always call and offer me a ride to church. My grandparents, J. B. Gregory and Lucy Wilburn Gregory, would also assure that I went to revivals. On this particular Sunday, my grandparents had picked me up as we were attending the revival at Meadorville Missionary Baptist Church located off Highway 10 in Macon County. I was especially troubled this particular morning as I felt my prayers were not being heard by God. On the way to church, I prayed continuously for God to save me. When we arrived, I went in and sat down in the fourth pew on the right aisle side. Then and there is where God saved me. The peace that transcends all earthly understandings came over me then and I've had it ever since. This year will mark 46 years.

Ricky T. Morris
Wednesday, June 18, 1997
Cool Springs, TN
Age 17

In the summer of 1997, I had just graduated from high school. I had started going to a local church on Wednesday nights just to play basketball. The name of the church was Cool Springs Cumberland Presbyterian Church. I became really close with a lot of the youth at that church. So close, that they invited me to go on their summer mission trip to Psalm 23 Camp in West Virginia. Psalm 23 Camp was way up in the mountains and in need of lots of repairs. It was a place that held Christian camps for children of all ages. While at the camp, I met lots of wonderful people from all over the United States. All week we did everything together. We worked, played, ate, slept, fellowshiped, and worshipped. As the week went along, I felt empty inside like I was missing something. I knew I was missing God in my life. I needed a Savior. All of those people at the camp were so happy and I wanted to feel that way so badly. After returning from the camp a few weeks later, we had a revival. I had been on the edge of my pew for three weeks because I didn't want to go down front in front of everyone. Finally, I felt like I was literally going to burst open if I didn't go down front. Conviction was so heavy on my heart. So, on Wednesday night, I went down front and hit my knees prayed for God to save me. After maybe 10-15 minutes, my heart was at peace. I no longer felt the pain and emptiness inside. I knew God had graciously saved my soul. I finally had a relationship with my Savior.

Luke Morrison

Age 22

The LORD allowed me to become a part of his family in the summer of my 22nd year. I had been to church very few times and do not recollect having ever heard the word “salvation.” Having never been involved in church and learning life from the Bible, I made decisions and moved in ways of the world and its teachings. My worldly relationships dictated where my heart was and needless to say left me always searching for the next false safety. The only true love I knew of was my mother and father, but they too were held by the mercy of themselves what they decided was right. When I was 14 years old they got divorced and I immediately began to search for relief from outside sources. Those sources were alcohol and drugs which could have easily taken me to death in a devil's hell, but would eventually bring me to the very end of my being. That end and my having nowhere to go and nothing left to stand on was where the LORD sought me out that day. My choices had taken me in and out of institutions and jails. My very best efforts took me to the very worst places I hope to say I'll ever go. I found great hope in the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous and remained sober for 2 years with a god of my understanding, and the hope of those rooms, but relapsed because without THE GOD one can never be truly healed from the devil's grip. I continued to be controlled by my indulgences and they continued to lead me into places of despair. My relationships and my obsessions continued to control me and continued to offer me nothing but heartache. I had given up and accepted that this was what life had to offer me. My decision to go to church was a “why not” choice and I looked for nothing to be gained from attending. I don't remember what the sermon was about but knew that the preacher knew I was there and it was derived solely for me. It was as if the lighting guy had shut all sources off and left only one shining directly on my face. I didn't know what conviction was and honestly thought that I was having a heart attack. I remember thinking how ironic it was that all of my previous choices hadn't yet killed me but that my first real decision to attend church was going to. I was the most uncomfortable and riddled with fear than I had ever been. I was in absolute agony and that was when the pastor gave the invitation to pray. I immediately felt the touch of GOD upon my skin and knew that I was the person He was offering the opportunity to. I didn't go and the pain grew still. They sang another song and again the invitation was given. Still I refused. Upon singing one last song the

preacher gave the final invitation and my entire person was in unspeakable distress. I began to step sideways toward the end of the pew and when both of my feet made it to the inside of the aisle; I could feel the peace of GOD begin to wash over me. With every step closer to the altar more and more peace filled my soul and the pain I was feeling literally flooded from my feet. I was saved and my name was written in the Book of Life before I made it to the altar to pray. Thank you, forever dear, LORD.

Gust Pappas

1966

At Church

Age 9

In 1966, I was nine years old and had just finished Vacation Bible School; I hadn't told anyone about it, but I came under conviction that week. Friday and Saturday I kept making myself busy to keep from thinking about it. Sunday morning I thought to myself everything was back to normal, but when the service started, I could feel God working on me. I knew I had to do something about it.

Bro. Heflen, our pastor, gave the invitation and I knew I needed to go down and pray. I couldn't make myself move, so I just stood there praying. Finally I told God I give up. When I started out of the pew, the second my foot hit the aisle, God saved my soul. I doubted several times that I was actually saved, but every time I would pray about it, God would always bring me back to that time and place.

Alana Stuard Morris
October 1990
McFerrin's Fall Revival
Age 12

In the late 1980's I would visit Springfield Baptist Church Vacation Bible School in the summer. My sister was saved at one of their VBS sessions. After that, the preacher came to our house to visit. I knew at that time I was lost and told my mom I was going to take a nap. I knew he probably wanted to talk to me, too. When I awoke from the nap, I still had the conviction. It didn't matter what I did, it didn't go away. It was October of 1990 when I was saved at McFerrin's fall revival. Brother Kenneth Massey was preaching and I knew that I was lost. When Brother Massey finished we were led to sing a couple of songs. During the singing, I looked to my right and saw Daddy Hollis (Brother Hollis Whitley) walking out from his pew in the "Amen Corner". I felt my heart sink, because I knew he was coming to see me. When he got to me, I was already in tears. He asked me "If I died tonight, where would I go?" I already knew the answer and I replied "hell". At that moment, several others had come by to talk or just say a single statement. My mom came over and we prayed in the pew for a little while. Then, we walked toward the mourners' bench. I continued to pray and seek God. After a few minutes, I was saved! I stood up, stopped crying and felt a peace about me. Then, we sang "I've Been Washed in the Blood of the Lamb". I knew at that moment, if something were to happen to me that I didn't have to worry where I was going when I died. I am so thankful for God's gift of salvation.

Von Gaines

At work beside my desk

Age 21

When I was 21 I met the girl who would soon be my wife, and the one who would help me to understand God's plan of salvation. After going to church with her casually for almost a year, she finally got me to agree to a meeting with her Sunday School teacher, Johnny Carver, at his house. I went over there with my Bible in my hand ready to argue all night about who was wrong and who was right. After exchanging pleasantries, he asked me point blank "Von...do you know, that you know, that you know that you are going to Heaven when life here is over?" I told him I thought I would, I was a pretty decent guy, hadn't done too many "terrible" things in my 21 years thus far. I told him that I felt like if the good outweighed the bad in judgment that I would be fine. He told me his experience of salvation and that he knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that he was going on to Glory when things here were all done. I went home troubled and didn't sleep all night. The next day at work I remembered something he told me...he said "if you truly believe in God, then don't trust what I say....you pray to God to reveal to you what is true and what is right". I started praying at my drawing desk at work, and before long I found myself shutting the door and getting on my knees right by that desk. I finally let go and told God that I had always loved Him; I just needed to know what to do. Right about that time the burdens were gone, and my soul was filled with sweet peace that only comes from on High. Not long after that I joined Victory Missionary Baptist and got baptized. Within a few months after that, Lisa and I were married. We have been married now for 19 years and have one child, Savannah, who was saved in 2008.

Lisa Gaines
February 11, 1978
Age 11

When I was a little girl , I guess about seven years old, I told my mom I wanted to be saved. She told me the good Lord would save me one day, but that first I had to be lost. She explained it like this..."If you and I took a walk and dropped a quarter, that quarter would be lost. We could go and look until it was found. But if the quarter had never been lost, we could look all day and would never find it. One day the Lord will let you know when you are lost and need to be saved."

She was right. Years later when I was eleven years old He let me know. It was a Saturday night and I was at home in my bedroom. All at once the darkest saddest feeling came over me and I knew. I told my mom and she asked if I wanted to pray, but I didn't. I remember trying to go to sleep that night and feeling miserable. Why? Why do we try and put it off?

The next morning at church, before we ever even went to Sunday school class, Bro. Carter gave an altar call. A lady got up to come over toward me, but before she could even get there I was already headed to the altar.

It seemed to me that I prayed for hours though my parents later told me it wasn't very long. It was winter (February 11, 1978 to be exact) and I still had my big coat on. I remember mother and one of the deacons taking my coat off while I continued to pray. At one point, I became very concerned--how would I know? What if He finally saved me and I missed it? I asked my sister and she replied, "I promise He will let you know". I continued to pray...and pray...and then there was one moment...I remember thinking I couldn't do anything else. All I could do was ask Him to save me as I had been. The next moment, there are no words from an eleven year olds view, complete happiness. That sad, dark feeling was gone. Everything looked so much brighter.

Now at age 43 there are many things I can no longer recall from when I was eleven, but that moment...that amazing space in time that I can't quite explain. I can still see it as if it were yesterday. The Creator of all, the One who made the oceans, the mountains, and the sweet little birds that sing...He took the time to reach down and save a little eleven year old girl.

I have been blessed to have had thousands of amazing moments in my life. God gave me wonderful parents who taught me about Him. I am

blessed with a husband whom I adore and a daughter that makes me so proud. I am so happy to be her mom. God has given me an awesome life...but that day that the Lord reached down and saved me, is the single most important, amazing moment in my life. It will one day take me home.

Savannah Gaines
March 12, 2008
McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church

When I was younger and attending Victory, I went to church with Makenzie Collier. She was my best friend and still is. We never really paid attention because we were younger at the time. One day she went to the preacher to talk about being lost and getting saved. I figured since she was younger than me I should be lost before her. It wasn't long before I realized I really was lost. I was lost for about 5 years. I regret putting my salvation off that long, but I was always too prideful to go to the altar. I went to the altar in some revivals and prayed at home, but it wasn't enough. I wasn't giving up myself completely. My parents and I started attending McFerrin, where I made many close friends. During this time, my grandmother passed away. She was the biggest Christian I knew. I've always wanted to be like her, and I wanted to know I was going to see her again. I started praying more to myself and one revival, on March 12th, I went to the altar to pray. I wasn't going to move until I got saved. I don't know how long I prayed, or exactly what I said, but there was a peace that came into my heart. I felt light and happy and I knew everything was alright. I looked up and everything seemed brighter. It's the best thing that ever happened to me and ever will happen to me. I'm so blessed He kept me safe all the years I was lost. I'm as happy as I will ever be, knowing that I'm saved.

Amy Franklin Johnston
October 1984
In the Old Building on McFerrin Avenue
Age 11

I was saved on a Sunday morning in October 1984 at the age of 11. For a little while I knew something did not feel right and every time Brother Taylor would give an altar call, I would hide in the restroom. But I did not know what was wrong. One Sunday, Sister Jana Dickens came to me and asked if I was lost and needed to pray. At that moment I realized I was lost. I began to pray in a pew that was a few rows from the back of the old church building on McFerrin Avenue. I do not know how long I had been praying before someone asked me if I trusted Him to save me and told me to just trust Him. I remember thinking 'yes, I trust You'. There was a small moment that I do not remember and cannot explain, but I know I felt peace and that was when the Lord saved my soul.

Kayla Franklin
On a Sunday Afternoon
At Home
Age 8

I was saved when I was 8 years old. It was a hot Sunday afternoon and my mom and nana were out shopping. My granddaddy and I had just got done feeding our dog, Molly, and we were walking back to the house. Granddaddy said he was going to go inside, but I decided to stay outside and play. As soon as he shut the door, it hit me like a ton of bricks, and I just started praying. I don't think I prayed for too long and the burden went away and was replaced with sweet peace. However, as soon as that happened the devil got a hold of me and told me it wasn't it, so I just passed it off as really bad heartburn or something. I never never forgot that Sunday afternoon and about a year later at the revival I realized that I did get saved that day.

Adam Pappas
September 2000
By my bedside
Age 8

I was eight years old in September 2000, when I felt a heavy burden on my way to school. I told my mother and she immediately turned around and went back home. I prayed by my bedside for a short time when I felt the burden go away.

Rachel Norris
June 2002
Cumberland Valley School of Gospel Music
Age 15

In June 2002, I was saved at Cumberland Valley School of Gospel Music. I had been lost for awhile and would go up to the altar to pray, but never received that peace. On Wednesday nights at Cumberland Valley they would have worship. People started singing songs and testifying. I began to feel that burden and started to pray. Katie Baker came up to Katy Whitley and me. She said lets go talk and pray. We went to her room and began to pray. After awhile I felt like I could not pray anymore and felt better. I thought I had been saved and that's when the devil came in. I started doubting it and was not sure if I was saved for awhile. A couple of years went by and one night at the revival Katy Whitley said she was saved. That is when I knew I was saved because I felt so happy for her and had that peace in my heart again. That same night I joined the church and told of how I was saved at Cumberland Valley.

Caty Woodard
September 2005
Longview Missionary Baptist Church
Age 5

I was sitting on the second row on a Sunday morning. Brother Monty was preaching about hell and I felt like something was heavy and bad in my heart and I asked daddy if he would pray with me and he said yes. So I kneeled down in the floor and prayed a long time and then I felt like a rock rolled away. I got up and told daddy I was saved and then went home. The next Sunday I said I wanted to join the church, and I got baptized the next week. It was September 2005 at Longview. I was 5 years old.

Nancy June Inman
Saturday, July 31, 2004
The Steps in my House
Age 10

I had sat through a week of listening to Bro. McClard preach about hell, and I had realized I was lost on that Wednesday. I was too prideful and scared to go to the altar and pray, so I would bury myself in a songbook and think of anything that wasn't God related. On Saturday morning, I was getting ready to go to my cousin's birthday party when my Mom and I got in a fight and she finally blurted out, "Do you want to pray?" I said, "Yes" and we prayed on the steps for about 30 minutes. I knew what to do but I couldn't let go of things like my friends and family. The burden felt like I was having a hot flash that would never go away. Finally, I gave it all up; all I wanted was to be saved and go to Heaven when I died. When He saved me, there wasn't fireworks or music, there was peace and I promise to this day, that it was the brightest day of my life.

Betty Anderson

About 14

GOD is good, He is so good. I was at the revival when I was about 14 years old. Bro. Baxter Walker was preaching about how we need to turn our lives over to God and put ourselves in His hands. His message was that if we didn't do these things, we were bound for hell. I know I didn't want to go to hell, so I started to pray at my seat. I went forward and told Bro. Walker that I was now ready to go to Heaven. I went home and talked to my Mom and told her what happened. I remember that she talked to me and asked me if I was sure I had been saved. I told her "yes, I'm sure." A few days later that week, I was baptized.

Zachery Anderson

2010

At home in bed

On a Wednesday night, on our way home from church, I was listening to music and thinking about the lesson we'd had. I started to cry and thought I was going to hell. I had a burden and told my Mom I was lost. We prayed beside my bed. Then God let me know I was saved. About two weeks later, I was baptized into the church. I couldn't wait to tell all of my family and friends that I'm saved.

Andrea Ritchie
June 25, 1994
Salem Missionary Baptist Church
Age 13

I was saved on June 25, 1994. I was 13 years old. My dad and my grandfather are both preachers, so I had been in church all my life. We went to church every Sunday, every Wednesday, and to quite a few revivals every summer. I had been taught that I would know when I was lost, and when that time came, I would have to go to God for salvation.

I don't remember the first time I felt lost, but I know I spent several years trying to hide my condition. When the preacher was preaching or an altar call was given, I would feel miserable inside. It felt like the weight of the world was on me, and I knew I needed to go pray. I didn't want anyone else to know I was lost, though, so I would go through the handshake with a big smile, or go to the bathroom during the altar call. I never wanted to go to the altar because then everyone would know I was lost. I tried bargaining with God, telling Him that I would just pray when I got home. The problem was, when I got home, the conviction was gone, and I couldn't pray.

This went on for quite a while. In June of 1994, I attended the Cumberland Valley School of Gospel Music. They had a wonderful session that year and a couple of my friends got saved at the school. At the closing night singing, as we were singing "Amazing Grace," it hit me that if we all died that night, my friends would go to Heaven, but I would go to hell. I sobbed all the way home, but my mom just assumed I was sad about leaving. She told me that we were going to the revival the next night. I remember having the very distinct feeling that if I didn't get saved then, I never would.

We went to the revival the next night at Salem Missionary Baptist Church in Gallatin. My grandfather was helping in the revival, and he preached that night about Calvary. I could hardly stand to sit through the service, but even when the altar call was given, I hesitated. I kept telling myself I would go to the altar after the next verse. The next verse turned into the next song, but I still waited. Finally, I saw my grandfather begin to walk down the aisle toward me. I knew he was coming to ask me if I felt lost. I don't know if he was even able to get the words out before I started walking with him toward the altar.

I prayed at the altar for a couple of hours. Having been in church all my life, I had heard many people talk about how they got saved and what it took to be saved. I was determined that I was not getting up off that altar until I was saved, so I tried every single thing I could remember, and then some. Nothing worked. I remember finally just giving a big sigh and praying, "I give up, Lord. I don't know what else to do." At that moment, God saved me. I felt sweet peace inside, but instantly Satan tried to confuse me and say that wasn't it. The people who were still there at the church were singing, and as I was trying to figure out what happened, I heard them sing, "Old Satan tried to tell me, the Bible was a lie, that Jesus did not love me, and I was doomed to die." The Lord reassured me that I had been saved, so I got up with a big smile and told them all what happened. We sang "Amazing Grace," and this time, instead of dread, I was able to feel that peace that passes all understanding.

Jeremy Ritchie

The first time I ever felt convicted was at a Christmas Eve service at a Methodist church in downtown Indianapolis. As the preaching went on, I began to feel guilty inside. I couldn't wait to get out of there. I couldn't even look the preacher in the eye.

Even after leaving the church, the guilty feeling I had inside never went away. Often, it just got worse. I remember feeling thirsty inside, but nothing ever quenched that thirst inside. I felt lost inside. I could tell you exactly where I was on the map, but inside, I was lost.

I walked around feeling that way for a long time. I lived with my grandmother on the east side of Indianapolis, and I can remember being at my grandmother's house and having the urge to go pray. I would go to the bathroom; since that was the only place I could be alone and get away from people. I would go in there and pray and try to make things right and get rid of the feeling inside, but to no avail. One day, I felt that same urge to go pray. While taking a shower, I got on my knees and began to cry out to God and begged Him to forgive me. I heard the snap of a finger and that burden was gone. It was like a tumbleweed being blown away by the wind. I could no longer pray. I remember my first thought was, "Is God mad at me?" I didn't understand why I couldn't pray anymore.

Once I got out of the shower, I remember feeling different. I remember looking at my hands and not knowing what to say, but I knew I felt different. I kept saying to myself, "I feel...I feel..." and the words "born again" came over me.

Brenda Kay Green Howard
Sycamore Valley Missionary Baptist Church
During the revival
Age 13

I was saved at age 13 during an old fashioned revival meeting at Sycamore Valley Missionary Baptist Church in Macon County. I had attended there with my family and grandparents, Sidney and Cholie Green, all my life. I had been visiting Ebenezer's day revival with some schoolmates and one of them got saved.

In the following week at Sycamore's revival, I felt so heavy burdened because my best friend had gotten saved but I had not. I became more convicted and the preaching was piercing my heart and I became more troubled and in deep despair. I remember the darkness I felt and the torment in my soul. Finally upon the altar, with my chains of bondage that imprisoned me, I trusted and turned it all over to the Lord and He set me free. He threw His loving arms around me giving me sweet, sweet peace that very day.

For a moment I knew not what happened but when Bro. T. C. Jones was leaning up looking at me smiling, I realized there had been a change and I had been redeemed. No longer was I sad and heavy laden for His gentle Holy Spirit had touched my soul and I had been made whole. He had whispered sweet, sweet peace to me.

I couldn't wait to tell others that my burden had been rolled away and the more I told it the happier I became. I joined Sycamore Valley Church and was baptized in the nearby creek in October by the pastor, Bro. J. C. Austin.

After moving to Nashville in 1962, I started attending McFerrin with my aunt and uncle, Opalle and Clarence Gregory. Around 1970, Tom and I joined on the credit of a letter as McFerrin became our home. That was one of the happiest days of my life. God had answered many, many prayers. I am so thankful I can say, by God's grace, I am on my way. I am ready when the Lord comes to take me away.

Joyce Swindle Whitley

1951

New Bethel Missionary Baptist church

Age 12

When I was 12, I knew in my heart that I was lost because I hadn't been saved, but I had never felt conviction in my heart. I prayed that I wanted to be saved; I guess I was praying for conviction when Brother Lambert started preaching on the Friday night of the revival at New Bethel that year. My heart started beating so hard that I was sure everyone could see it. Every word that the preacher said was aimed directly at me. When they gave the altar call, I went up immediately. I prayed for a while and nothing happened. I prayed harder but still nothing happened. I really wanted to be saved that night because I didn't want to feel that bad any longer. Finally, I told God that I didn't know what else to do, but I knew that He could do it. Then I realized that the pain was gone and I felt calm and peaceful. I didn't get up for a few minutes because I wanted to be sure, but the pain was gone and I couldn't pray any more. The peace is still there.

Eld. Paul G. Patterson
August or September 1947
Way out on Nolensville Road
Age 17

It was a Wednesday night in the late summer time somewhere out on Nolensville Road. They were singing, "I Can Hear My Savior Calling." I heard about the Lord when I was very young on a Sunday afternoon at home. I shall never forget that day. I was in deep trouble. So I had to go to the meeting with my parents. I truly got saved that night. I joined McFerrin and was baptized by Bro. F. L. Ray at the creek in Goodlettsville on June 15, 1958.

I was called to preach in November of 1956. I fought it until 1962 and then during the summer revival at McFerrin, I told my calling and Bro. F. L. Ray said I had better get at it; he said, "Preach the third Sunday night of July". And, I did. The Lord has been with me all the way. My calling was to pastor a church.

Anna Brynn Carneal

Summer 2009

At home

Age 6

I was saved last summer during the revival. The preacher was preaching on Sunday night about being lost and I got really scared. The next day when my mom was talking about us going back to church I felt really scared again and my heart hurt. It wouldn't go away. I knew I needed to be saved. I went in my mom and dad's room and got on the floor and started praying. Then I stopped praying and I felt better, my heart didn't feel bad anymore. I wasn't scared anymore. I went and told my mom I felt better. She asked me if I thought I got saved and I told her yes. Now I am not scared anymore. I am saved!

Amber Carneal
Revival in Indiana
Age 7

My mom and dad took us to a revival in Indiana. That night when the preacher was finished preaching he gave an altar call. All of a sudden my heart started pounding and I was so scared. I knew at that moment that I was lost. It was the first time that I had ever felt that way. I went straight to the altar and began to pray. I wasn't there very long and I don't even remember exactly what I prayed, but after a few minutes the burden was gone. I didn't feel like I needed to pray anymore. I knew without a doubt that I was saved! I leaned up and told my mom and dad. I praise God for that day, and for a mom and dad who took me to church and taught me about being saved. I knew what I felt when I was lost and I knew that God was the only one who could take that away! And He did!

Patrick Carneal
Church Camp at Lake Junaluska, NC
Age 9

I was saved when I was 9 years old. I was at Lake Junaluska, a church camp in North Carolina. I had gone with my parents who were serving as chaperones with the church youth group that my brother was in. On the last night of the camp, we went to the worship area on the hill overlooking the lake. It is truly a beautiful place that makes you appreciate all that God has created. From this area, with the pews built into the hillside, you overlook the lake, the opposite hill with a cross on it, and the mountains of western North Carolina.

Here the camp held the closing services. During that service, the pastor began talking about salvation and our need for it. For the first time in my life I understood what awaited me if I did not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. I immediately felt conviction and began to pray for Jesus to save my soul. While doing so, I felt a calm that I had never experienced before in my life.

Walking back to our rooms that night is something I will never forget. I felt like I could fly, I was so happy. Shortly thereafter, I told my mother what had happened and that I wanted to join the church. I joined our church during that year following this trip.

Sandra Blizzard
At Church
Between my 3rd and 4th Grade

I was saved during the summer between my 3rd and 4th grade year in school. My Bible tells me that 'no man can pluck me from His hand' and I believe that. I was at church on Sunday Morning with my best friend, CJ. The altar call was given and at first, I didn't move. The 'people at the back of the room' that were there to pray with us waited for any 'takers.' CJ got up and started to the back of the room. I was nervous but got up and went with her. We went into a Sunday School room and the lady asked me if there was a reason I wanted to be saved. I distinctly remember my heart being heavy and I was crying. My response was "So I can take my little sister to church with me." (My little sister was born paralyzed from the waist down – Spina Bifida.) She said "Okay, let's pray about that." I bowed my head, CJ next to me, and sobbed while my heart spoke to God. I don't remember hearing anything during this span of time – but suddenly...it happened! God saved me! The fear and heartache I felt before was gone! It was almost like my tears dried up immediately! I describe this time as 'the calm after the storm' because of how peaceful I felt.

Because of this, I know, that I know, that I know I'm saved and Heaven bound! When God speaks to your soul, there's nothing like it and you never forget it. Perfection of the flesh is not part of the promise – but my soul is safe.

**Brice Oldham
October 1931
Old Dixon Creek Baptist Church
Age 14**

I was saved at Old Dixon Creek Baptist Church in 1931. I was on the floor beside the pulpit with a terrible burden. The Lord saved my soul but I was not willing to accept it because it was not like I thought it would be. I went on for years looking for more. I went back to the mourner's bench many times after that but I could not find any more than I had. That one place and time would always come to my mind. For many years I was still not satisfied. As I got older I became very concerned. I finally promised the Lord that if that was it, to make it very plain to me and I would accept it and tell the world. When I was 82 years old, he made it plain and I first shared with my wife that I was saved. I joined McFerrin Baptist Church and was baptized and have been very happy since and have enjoyed serving the Lord and working at the church.

Luke Carver
Tuesday of 2011
McFerrin Missionary Baptist Church
Age 12

I was saved at summer revival on a Tuesday. I really don't remember who was preaching but I remember my heart feeling like it was nailed to the pew. Then they gave an alter call and as soon as I got down there, I had a sweet peace. But as soon as I got saved I doubted. So it took me a half a year later in Holiday World to find it out. So I told everybody I knew. Then I joined the church and was baptized.

